Hafa Adai!

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Court grants travel subsidy for man who fled to Wisconsin. PAGE 2

'Redistribute $2M forfeited from 1st local stimulus' PAGE 3

$1

CUC: FAC up starting July 1

The increasing cost of fuel in the world market and the heightened pain at the gas pump will soon be reflected on your already-high utility bill.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. announced yesterday that its Fuel Adjustment Charge will be increasing from $0.36225 per kilowatt-hour to $0.43285 per kWh effective July 1, 2022.

CUC said that its fuel supplier, Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc., has notified it that there has been an increase in the average international fuel oil prices that will affect the FAC. This, in turn, will mean CUC will adjust the lube and fuel element by 19.49%, it said. The FAC rate is uniform across all customer classes,

See CUC on Page 4

Labor expects severe decline in CW funding next fiscal year

» Over $700M in PUA funding, dispersed $300M so far

» From over 100 PUA coordinators, 15 auditors, Labor down to 16 coordinators, six auditors

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor received $3.23 million in Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers (CW-1) fees from the federal government in fiscal year 2022, but the department expects that amount to drop drastically this coming fiscal year, according to Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente last Friday.

Benavente

Speaking before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee during a hearing Friday on Labor's budget for fiscal year 2023,

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COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Army IRT spays, neuters over 300 pets so far

Lt. Col. Eugene Johnson, right, a veterinarian with the U.S. Army Medical Detachment Veterinary Services Support, is assisted by Sgt. Katherine Thompson during a spaying procedure yesterday at the Saipan Cares for Animals clinic on Middle Road in Gualo Rai. LEIGH GASES

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

U.S. Army veterinarians who are doing an outreach at the Saipan Cares for Animals clinic in Gualo Rai have so far spayed and neutered over 200 pet cats and dogs and administered over 137 vaccines to dogs and 11 vaccines to cats, along with 42 rabies vac-

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INSIDE

BUSINESS
Japan's border controls to curb the spread of coronavirus infections is gradually loosening.

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NATION
Forty-six people are found dead in and near a trailer and 16 others are taken to hospitals.

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WORLD
Russian long-range bombers struck a crowded shopping mall in Ukraine's city of Kremenchu.

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Local

MVA's Iakopo: $15M is allocated for TRIP Japan

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Office of the Governor has allocated $15 million for the CNMI's tourism bubble program with Japan, called TRIP Japan, which is set to officially launch on Sept. 1.

According to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Iakopo, the Office of the Governor and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres assisted in funding the program. "Thank you to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres for really assisting MVA, especially in regards to the funding," she said.

The MVA managing director said the allocated funding is crucial because without it, the CNMI would not have been able to push forward with TRIP Japan.

When asked what exactly the funds would be used for, Iakopo said a portion would go toward the TRIP Program's airline incentive, while the remaining funding would be used to promote and advertise the CNMI in Japan.

"The $15 million would be used for airline incentives and then we want to have some marketing programs. We want to also do a lot of cooperative promotions and advertisements with our travel trade partners. What we want to do is come up with different programs so that we can entice our Japanese tourists to also visit Tinian and Rota as well," she said.

David Baker, United Airlines Saipan general manager, said the flight service from Japan is a great boost to the CNMI's ongoing economic recovery

"This service is exciting and our hope is that it will help to restore the Japan tourism for our island. It is a good boost for our community," he said.

According to a previous article on the *Saipan Tribune*, the inaugural flight for TRIP Japan is set to arrive on Sept. 1, starting off with three weekly flights.

Court approves travel subsidy for defendant who fled to Wisconsin

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted the request for travel subsidy for a man who is facing federal charges in the CNMI but had fled to Wisconsin where he was arrested.

Bonifacio "Boni" Sagana filed a request with the District Court for the NMI last Friday to arrange for his noncustodial transportation to Saipan or furnish him with the fare for such transportation to Saipan, as well as provide an amount of money for subsistence expenses to Saipan, so that he may appear in the NMI District for his arraignment and further proceedings in this matter.

In an order issued the same day, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted Sagana's request after he was deemed indigent and could not afford to travel to the CNMI on his own expense.

"Sagana lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He is out of custody, on pretrial release. He has been found indigent and provided court-appointed counsel in this district and the Eastern District of Wisconsin. As shown by his financial affidavit, he does not have the means to pay for his travel to Saipan," the court stated.

Following the issuance of the court's order, the U.S. marshal was tasked to arrange for Sagana's noncustodial transportation to Saipan.

The court has scheduled a status conference for June 29 at 9am.

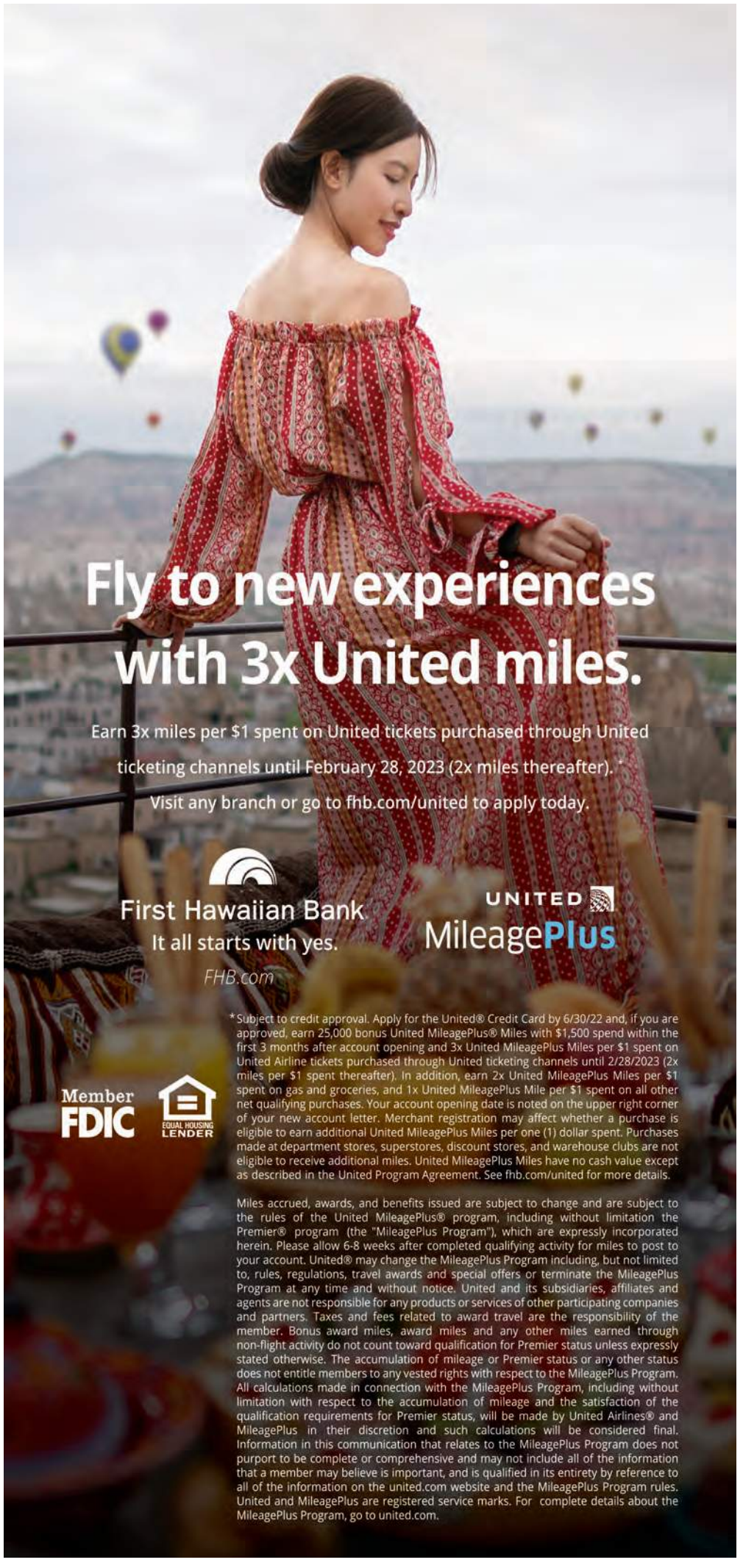
According to court documents, the U.S. District Court for the NMI issued an arrest warrant for Sagana following a grand jury indictment back on Jan. 31, on the charge of conspiring with others to unlawfully produce a CNMI driver's license.

However, Sagana fled the CNMI before he could be arrested and was only arrested on May 16, in Wisconsin.

Sagana was allegedly identified by other defendants facing the same charges as the person who arranged for them to fraudulently obtain a CNMI driver's license using a counterfeit U.S. immigration visa number.

According to documents from the Eastern District Court of Wisconsin, Sagana, a U.S. permanent resident, appeared at an initial hearing on May 16, before Judge James R. Sickel.

The charge against Sagana is punishable by up to a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment and a $250,000 fine.


Fly to new experiences with 3x United miles.
Earn 3x miles per $1 spent on United tickets purchased through United ticketing channels until February 28, 2023 (2x miles thereafter).*
Visit any branch or go to fhb.com/united to apply today.
First Hawaiian Bank
It all starts with yes.
FHB.com
UNITED MileagePlus
Member FDIC
EQUAL HOUSING LENDER
*Subject to credit approval. Apply for the United® Credit Card by 6/30/22 and, if you are approved, earn 25,000 bonus United MileagePlus® Miles with $1,500 spend within the first 3 months after account opening and 3x United MileagePlus Miles per $1 spent on United Airline tickets purchased through United ticketing channels until 2/28/2023 (2x miles per $1 spent thereafter). In addition, earn 2x United MileagePlus Miles per $1 spent on gas and groceries, and 1x United MileagePlus Mile per $1 spent on all other net qualifying purchases. Your account opening date is noted on the upper right corner of your new account letter. Merchant registration may affect whether a purchase is eligible to earn additional United MileagePlus Miles per one (1) dollar spent. Purchases made at department stores, superstores, discount stores, and warehouse clubs are not eligible to receive additional miles. United MileagePlus Miles have no cash value except as described in the United Program Agreement. See fhb.com/united for more details.
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‘Redistribute $2M forfeited from 1st local stimulus’

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) pre-filed yesterday a resolution requesting Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig to assist the taxpayers who were unable to use up all the funds in their first local stimulus.

DeLeon Guerrero

Atalig earlier disclosed that approximately $2 million from the first local stimulus were not used by the recipients by the deadline of March 2022 and that the funds reverted back to the CNMI government.

To help families and stimulate the local economy, the forfeited amounts from first local stimulus of $500 per taxpayer should be reconsidered and be redistributed to those who lost the funds as a result of the deadline, DeLeon Guerrero said in her Senate Resolution 22-25.

In September 2021, the government issued $500 local stimulus cards to CNMI taxpayers using American Rescue Plan Act funding.

DeLeon Guerrero said numerous individuals reserved the stimulus funds for specific dates and some reserved the funds for family needs at a later date.

The senator pointed out that the deadline of March 2022 notice to use the first stimulus appeared on the Division of Revenue and Taxation website but this did not provide reasonable notice to many card recipients who missed to use the funds timely as a result.

DeLeon Guerrero said the residents in the community are faced with financial uncertainties due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that had caused reduced hours, furloughs, and other financial hardships.

The senator said the impacts of the Ukraine war, the steadily increasing fuel costs, and the rise in the inflation rate all add to the families’ financial burdens.

The government recently issued a second local stimulus card providing $500 per taxpayer using ARPA money to help families and also further stimulate the local economy.

Guam reports 151 new COVID cases; 18 hospitalized

The Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services has reported 151 new cases of COVID-19 from 1,173 specimens that were collected on June 27, 2022.

Of the new cases yesterday, 24 were reported through the Department of Defense.

Guam also reported 18 new hospitalizations yesterday.

On Monday, DPHSS reported 203 new cases of COVID-19 from 3,217 specimens analyzed from tests administered June 24 – 26, 2022.

- June 27: 21 of 743 tested positive for COVID-19
- June 26: 100 of 974 test positive for COVID-19
- June 25: 82 of 1,500 test positive for COVID-19

Twenty-eight of the cases reported Monday were through the Department of Defense.

Last Friday, DPHSS reported 150 new cases of COVID-19 from 1,220 specimens collected June 23, 2022. A total of 27 of the cases reported Friday were through the Department of Defense.

To date, there have been a total of 51,588 officially reported cases, 371 deaths, 595 cases in active isolation, and 50,622 not in active isolation. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CEC to discuss mail registration, election of officers at its first board meeting

» Registration drive will he held on Tinian July 6, Rota July 8

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Election Commission board chair Jesus I. Sablan has called for the commission’s first board meeting tomorrow, Thursday, to discuss mail registration, among other items on the agenda.

Sablan

The CEC commissioners are also expected to elect their officers at the board meeting, which will be held at 1:30pm at the CEC conference room in Susupe.

The CEC board last elected Sablan in August 2020 as chairman, a position that he has been holding since 2018.

Part of Thursday’s meeting agenda is CEC executive director Kayla Igitol’s report.

Meanwhile, the CEC will hold a voter registration drive on Tinian on July 6 and on Rota on July 8.

CEC said the registration on Tinian will be at the Tinian Mayor’s Office from 9:30am to 2pm. The registration on Rota will be at the Rota Mayor’s Office from 9:30am to 2pm.

Previously registered voters who have failed to vote in the 2018 and 2020 general elections must re-register to be eligible to vote in the Nov. 8, 2022 general election.

First-time voters are required to provide a valid U.S. passport or birth certificate in order to register.

The CEC just completed its last registration drive for the month of June on Saipan last Saturday at the San Vicente Youth Center. The CEC was able to register a total of 44, including 23 at San Vicente Youth Center, for the four Saturday drives.

CEC held similar registration drives on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota from February to May 2022.

Sept. 9 is the last day for registration for this November election.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.5-magnitude quake in Pagan Region

At 5:02am on June 28, 2022, a report of a 4.5-magnitude earthquake occurred in Pagan region, Northern Marianas Islands. Currently, there were no reports of personnel injuries or damages to infrastructure and no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Triple J Saipan not participating in appliance rebate program

The CNMI Energy Division Office would like to inform all recipients of the appliance rebate voucher program that, due to unforeseen situations preventing full participation by Triple J as a participating retailer/vendor, effective immediately, Triple J Saipan Store will no longer be accepting rebate vouchers on Saipan under the CNMI Energizing Insular Communities Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program until further notice.

Triple J Store on Tinian remains a participating retailer/vendor and will continue to accept rebate vouchers.

For additional program information or questions, contact the Division of Energy Office at 664-4480/1. ***(PR)***

OPENING CEREMONY

Dignitaries and guests cut a “ti” leaf ribbon to officially open the 23rd Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden last June 18, 2022, at Garapan Fishing Base on Saipan. MVA

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
SUMMER YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CAMP
FOR YOUTH 13-17 YEARS OLD

AUGUST 1 ~ 5, 2022
MONDAY ~ FRIDAY 12:30PM ~ 5:00PM
KAGMAN COMMUNITY CENTER
ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: FIELD TRIPS CULTURAL ACTIVITIES SPORTS CRAFTS TALAYA ROD FISHING KULU BLOWING STONE SLINGING GAMES ROLLERSKATING HISTORIC SITES TOUR PRESENTATIONS CANOE HOUSE
SPACE IS LIMITED TO 80 YOUTH
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JULY 13, 2022, 4:00PM
DOWNLOAD APPLICATION:
www.dys.gov.mp
www.dcca.gov.mp
PICK UP/DROP OFF APPLICATION:
KAGMAN COMMUNITY CENTER/TANAPAG YOUTH CENTER
MONDAY~FRIDAY, 7:30AM~4:30PM
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 237-1015~18 OR EMAIL: arangamar@dys.gov.mp / aolopai@dys.gov.mp
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MARIANAS

ARMY

From Page 1

cines since the start of their free services last June 18.

As a show of appreciation, the team from the U.S. Army's 445th Medical Detachment Veterinary Services Support had a "Distinguished Visitor Day" yesterday, during which they were introduced to several ranking officials at the Office of the Governor and had a chance to explain what their outreach, called Innovative Readiness Training program or IRT, is all about. The program basically allows service members to work with local communities in need of assistance while military personnel deployed for the mission get hands-on, real world training.

Afterwards, the people in attendance were invited to observe their work being done at the Saipan Cares for Animals clinic and at the Gualo Rai Youth Center.

The group consists of a mix of medical experts and trainees. The veterinary medical personnel include five veterinary corps officers and 10 animal care specialists. There is one senior veterinary noncommissioned officer and one supply specialist. The veterinary mission offers free neutering and spaying services up until tomorrow only. The services are on a first come, first served basis only.

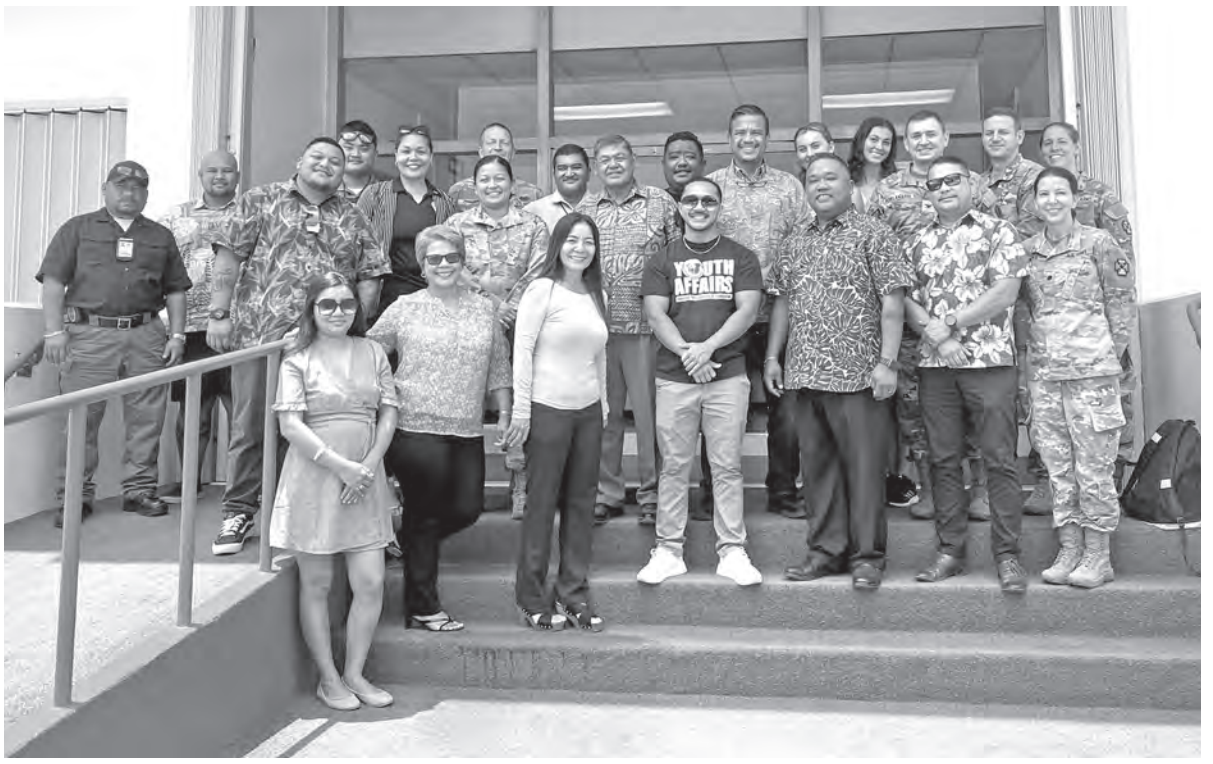
Master Sgt. Jennifer Bunch, who is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the mission, said that by the time they get to the clinic at 6am, community members are already lined up outside the clinic—even as early as 3am.

"I've had anywhere from 20 people to about 50 lined up in the morning. …I have to be the bearer of bad news. I can only do so many dogs, so many cats, spays, neuters, depending on what it is. We'll determine how long it takes any of my vets at a given time to do the operation. I got to make sure that I have enough on my staff there to do the pre-exam to make sure that they're healthy enough, because we've unfortunately had to turn away a few animals because they were not healthy enough to go under anesthesia.

"So those are the things we have to look for. And then they go in, they get their medications, they go to sleep, they have a nice nap, they get surgery, then our animal care specialist…monitors them. Most of them are cuddled for 30 minutes to an hour while they wake up. Then after that [they]... go home to recover for seven to 10 days and we recommend them to be couch potatoes and so forth," she added.

Veterinarian Lt. Col. Eugene Johnson thinks he may have spayed and neutered "more dogs, but I don't know exactly. We've probably done over 200 since we started last week, total. And we just got to mix them in. The cats generally go quicker than the dogs, depending on the size of the dog and the age of the dog…"

SCA receptionist Tiara Pelisamen said that the feedback that they have gotten from community members is a lot of gratitude. She said the wait is long, with the lines in the morning going past the neighboring poker arcade next to the clinic, but people wait it out because they want their pets spayed and neutered.



Senate President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), ninth from right, who is currently the acting governor, is joined by lawmakers, special assistant Glenna Sakisat Palacios of the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, some members of the U.S. Army Medical Detachment Veterinary Services Support team, Youth Affairs Office staff, and Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority staff, after a presentation yesterday in the Office of the Governor's conference room. LEIGH GASES

Acting governor Jude U. Hofschneider, center, is seen with the military detachment under the Innovative Readiness Training program at the Gualo Rai Youth Center where animal vaccines are being administered for free. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CUC

From Page 1

whether residential, commercial, or government.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and the Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

LABOR

From Page 1

Benavente also disclosed that since 2020, they're been given over $700 million for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and to date, have dispersed over $300 million of that. She said they spent some for administrative costs, leaving a $400 million balance for PUA benefits.

In response to questions by committee members, Benavente said they have estimated what they plan to disperse in CW funding for each educational entity, depending on their training plan or educational plan.

"So what they have asked for is what they're going to be receiving in light of the fact that we are expecting a severe decline in CW funding for the CNMI," she said.

CNMI employers pay U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services $200 for each CW worker they hire. USCIS then turns over a portion of that money to the CNMI government.

The Labor secretary said they do have a spending plan that they have drafted with the educational entities involved and submitted that draft to the U.S. Department of Labor for review and approval.

She said the total CW funding that they received in fiscal year 2022 is $3.23 million and the expenditures are $1.64 million, leaving a balance of $330,451.

Benavente said the CW money was dispersed in fiscal year 2022 to the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, Public School System, Northern Marianas College, and training entities Latte Training Academy Inc. and Guam Marianas Training.

She said the Apprenticeship State Expansion Program, which is under CNMI Labor, also received funding from CW funds.

She said that Island Training Solutions is not on this list of recipients, but that they have been a recipient in the past and may be in the future.

Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) noted that according to the budget submission for the current fiscal year in accordance with U.S. Public Law 115-218, there should have been $2.1 million in CW funding and asked where $1.25 million or $1.3 million went.

Benavente said what it should have been or what they have been receiving are two different things, but that they constantly ask U.S. Revenue and Treasury to update them on the funds that come in so they can disperse them accordingly.

To Manglona's question where the $1.2 million to $1.3 million is, Benavente asked that she be allowed to clarify the figures and that she will provide the exact CW funding right after the committee's meeting.

When asked for the cause of the anticipated severe decrease in CW funds, Benavente said the beginning of the PUA program and the beginning of the pandemic saw many businesses shut down, reduce operations, and repatriate many foreign workers. "And the economy shut down," she added.

Benavente said the good news is that United Airlines is going to be flying to Japan in August and there is a new commuter airline.

"All those things will take time to really stimulate the economy. Without the businesses operating, we are not going to have a need for that many CW workers, therefore not too many renewals or new hires will take place for foreign workers," she said.

Benavente said they are looking at a very small economic recovery.

On PUA, Benavente said they have not returned a penny to the U.S. Department of Labor. She said they're working hard to disperse all PUA funds before June 2023.

Rep. Celina Babauta (D-Saipan) said they have received complaints from some PUA claimants that they their benefits are still not being dispersed despite being told by Labor employees that their applications and supporting documents are in.

Benavente said when they started with the PUA program, they had over 100 PUA coordinators and that now they have less than 16.

Benavente said they are still seeing a high turnover of coordinators because many know that they will not have a job with the PUA program within a few months to a year.

"Whenever we do hire someone, it takes months of training just to get through the loopholes, which is the Unemployment Insurance Program letters regarding rules and regs," she said.

Benavente said it does take a long time to process PUA applications.

To add to that problem, if the claimant has an overpayment issue because the application was filed incorrectly with customary wages or misfiled earnings, that puts another bump in the road to processing, she said.

The Labor secretary pointed out that they used to have 15 auditors in their Benefit Payment Control Unit, and now they're down to six.

"So the time is painstakingly slow for all of us. Every week we have meetings and we discuss the numbers," she said.

Benavente said each week they see how many have been approved, disqualified or uninitiated applications.

She said PUA 1, which is the period from June 2020 to December 2020, is still a priority and that there are still some who are waiting for their PUA 1 benefits.

CUV ADVISORIES

Scheduled power service interruption today

There will be a scheduled power service interruption today, June 28, 2022 as the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. continues its ongoing systems maintenance.

■ Time: 6am to 10am

❑ Area(s) affected: Garapan (Plumeria Steakhouse, Grandvrio Resort, Joeten Hafadai Shopping Center Building, ABC Store, Serenti Hotel, Cha Café & Bistro, American Pizza & Grill, Paris Croissant & Café, Panda House Waffles, New Shin Restaurant and ARC Building)

■ Momentary Power Service Interruption

Time: 6am to 6:30am and 9:30am to 10am

❑ Area(s) affected: Garapan Beach Road.

■ Purpose: To re-install overhear primary conductors and conductor jumpers for the two airbrake switches.

■ Circuit: Feeder 2

■ Water well(s) affected: None

■ Wastewater facility affected: 54 Lift Station, however, no areas will be affected.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

Scheduled water service interruption for Tun Herman Pan Road, Lower Dandan Homestead, As Lito, Portions of As Perdido, Tottotville and Koblerville

There will be a scheduled water service interruption on Friday, July 1, 2022, from 8:30am to 4pm for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers on Tun Herman Pan Road, Lower Dandan Homestead, As Lito, Portions of As Perdido, Tottotville, and Koblerville from Saint Jude Church to ABCD Market.

The purpose of the water service interruption is to allow CUC operations personnel to repair a possible main service lateral leak located by the DD-8 well on Tun Herman Pan Road. Water service to the affected areas will resume soon after.

For the safety of the men and women working at the repair site, the public is advised to proceed with caution when traveling through the jobsite and/or take an alternative route if possible.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

Wanted: Chamorro speakers for linguistic study

A team of linguistics students at the University of Bremen in Germany is looking for Chamorro speakers who may be interested in participating in a study about certain grammatical properties of the Chamorro language.

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council in the CNMI, which is facilitating the identification of possible study participants, said it was approached recently for assistance by three linguistics students working under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Stolz of the University of Bremen, who are conducting fieldwork as part of their ongoing study of the Chamorro language.

NMHC said that study participants will be expected to participate in three interview sessions via Zoom for about 25 minutes at a time.

The first session will focus on team introductions, getting to know you, and sharing more about this project. The second session will feature basic, but concrete questions about the topics they are researching. The third session will build on the second session and feature sentences that you will be asked to evaluate.

"If you are confident in speaking Chamorro proficiently in day-to-day conversations, you are an excellent candidate for this study. The team's communication with participants will be held in English; however, some of their questions will be posed in the Chamorro language," NMHC said in a mass email.

To indicate your interest in being a participant in this study, send an email to info@nmhcouncil.org with your full name and email address by July 5, 2022. "We will share your information with the team for further communication on this project," the NMHC email added.

NMHC serves as a conduit at times to support academic researchers who have an interest in studying one or more aspects of the humanities in the CNMI community. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

AIRFIELD DAMAGE REPAIR EXERCISE

TINIAN—Marines and sailors work together during an airfield damage repair exercise in support of Valiant Shield 2022 at the World War II-era runways on Tinian.

U.S. NAVY/LT. TYLER BALDINO

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-22-021

Tinian Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for Architectural and Engineering Services for the Tinian Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1, for Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAESP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Proposal & One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelopes marked "CUC-RAESP-22-021, Tinian Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **June 29, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST).** Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAESP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RAESP under the contract. The RASEP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAESP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on June 16, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Engineer for Power Division via email address adrian.reyes@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Purchasing Technician via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfections in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-22-022

Rota Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for Architectural and Engineering Services for the Rota Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1 for Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAESP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Proposal & One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelopes marked ***"CUC-RAESP-22-022, Rota Concrete Power Poles Project, Phase 1"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **June 29, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST).** Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAESP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RAESP under the contract. The RASEP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAESP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on June 16, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Engineer for Power Division via email address adrian.reyes@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Purchasing Technician via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfections in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

SCENES FROM THE 'TASTE' FESTIVAL CHRYSTAL MARINO

A group performs a Polynesian cultural dance at the 23rd Taste of the Marianas stage last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Carolinian dancers perform a cultural dance during the 23rd Taste of the Marianas last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Young men pose while standing in line at Tbar's booth during the 23rd Taste of the Marianas last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Elaine Fernandez of Sadog Tasi poses for Saipan Tribune while enjoying a fruit drink during the Taste of the Marianas last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Sachiyo Masubuchi of Japan smiles for Saipan Tribune after placing first in the Sukiyaki Food Competition at the 23rd Taste of the Marianas last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW/SWMD22-ITB No.: 42200122

SUBMISSION DATE: July 27, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Rehabilitation/Replacement of Protective Well Casings and Structures for the Groundwater and Landfill Gas Monitoring Wells at the Marpi Landfill, Saipan

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION, LOWER BASE TRANSFER STATION, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **June 29, 2022** at the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the **Scope of Work at the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station required for each set.**

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **July 15, 2022,** 9:00 a.m. local time at the Solid Waste Management Division Conference Room, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **July 20, 2022** to **Mr. Blas T. Mafnas, Director of Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station**, Saipan or fax to (670) 322-2762. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Direct Tokyo-Saipan flights to resume this September

Flights between Tokyo, Japan and Saipan will resume on Sept. 1, 2022, the first direct flights between the two destinations since before the COVID pandemic.

United Airlines will fly three weekly flights departing Tokyo-Narita International Airport at 9:25pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays and arriving on Saipan one day later at 2am. Flights from Saipan will depart on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7am and arrive in Narita at 9:35am.

The direct flights are supported by the Office of the Governor, Marianas Visitors Authority's Tourism Recumption Investment Plan program, and the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

"We are pleased to partner with United Airlines in reopening the Japan market, which is historically the founding source market of tourism in the Marianas and remains an important market for us today," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "This is all possible thanks to the funding we received from the Office of the Governor to implement the TRIP program, which started with South Korea last July and is now helping us jumpstart Japan. With the recent easing of travel restrictions by the Japan government, we know many Japanese are eager to travel, and we looking forward to welcoming our friends from Japan back to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. We look forward to their return beginning in September for a vacation in the Marianas."

"We applaud Gov. Torres, his administration, and Marianas Visitors Authority for their vision to rebuild the Japanese market," said Sam Shinohara, managing director of airport operations for Asia Pacific at United Airlines. "Our sales team in Japan is committed to working closely with MVA to promote travel to the CNMI. We look forward to launching this new service in September."

To reboot the Japan market and support the flights, the MVA will hold a Marianas Seminar & Webinar on July 8, 2022, in Tokyo and make sales calls to key travel agencies, airlines, and other tourism partners.

Air service connection through Japan will also aid residents of the Marianas travelling to and from the continental U.S. and other destinations. ***(MVA)***

Public invited to free 'Law in the Community' lecture series

The Northern Marianas Judiciary Historical Society announces that interim dean Rose Cuison-Villazor of the Rutgers Law School and associate professor Eun Hee Han of Georgetown Law School will be presenting in the Law in the Community Lecture Series on June 28, June 30, July 5, and July 7.

The professors will each give two public lectures about topical legal issues. The professors will take questions from the audience. The lectures will take place as follows:

■ Today, June 28, at 12pm at the Guma' Hustisia Assembly Hall in Susupe. Cuison-Villazor will present a lecture titled "Critical Race Theory, Pacific Islands, and Cultural Rights." The lecture will outline critical race theory and examine how it applies to laws such as the CNMI's Article XII, which restricts ownership of land to indigenous people.

■ Thursday, June 30, at 6pm at the American Memorial Park Auditorium. Han will give a lecture called "Critical Race Stories." The lecture will discuss a groundbreaking article by scholar Mari J. Matsuda that analyzes discrimination against people because of their accents.

■ Tuesday, July 5, at 6pm at the American Memorial Park Auditorium. Cuison-Villazor will present a lecture called "*The Insular Cases* and Citizenship." *The Insular Cases* are U.S. Supreme Court decisions from over 100 years ago that discuss the status of U.S. territories. The lecture will discuss those cases and more recent cases involving American Samoa in which the *Insular Cases* played a major role.

■ Thursday July 7, at 12pm at the Guma' Hustisia Assembly Hall in Susupe. Han will give a lecture titled "Cross-Cultural Competency and Law." The lecture will discuss a new standard of the American Bar Association that requires law schools to educate their students on cross-cultural competency, bias, and racism.

The lectures are free and will be livestreamed on the Judiciary's Facebook page. Members of the CNMI Bar Association can receive one CLE credit per lecture attended. The professors, who were both raised in the CNMI, will also be teaching introductory law classes as part of the Judiciary Summer Pre-Law Program.

The Law in the Community Lecture Series is made possible in part by a major grant from the Northern Marianas Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in the lectures do not necessarily represent those of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, National Endowment for the Humanities, NMI Judiciary, or Judiciary Historical Society. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP22-CHCC/CGC-018

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JULY 8TH, 2022 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE - SAIPAN"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP22-CHCC/OUT-PATIENT PHARMACY-019

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JULY 8TH, 2022 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"Pharmacy Department Drive-thru Renovation & Improvements"
(Coordinate, Design, Oversight Monitoring & Construction)
For CHCC Hospital/Pharmacy Department

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
(RE-ANNOUNCEMENT)

JVA No. 22 – 029

Opening Date: June 16, 2022
Closing Date: June 30, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Human Resouces Technician, Senior**
DEPARTMENT:	**COA/Human Resources**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$24,904.00 - $33,620.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Human Resources Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:
- Provides specialized administrative and paraprofessional human resources support services related to recruitment, employment testing, classification, compensation, benefits and training.
- Responds to inquiries and provides assistance of internal staff, external customers and vendors.
- Responds to questions and information requests and provides technical assistance, guidance and support regarding programs, services, policies and/or procedures.
- Performs research and verifies information; performs calculations; processes timekeeping information; compiles and maintains data for audit purposes.
- May process job vacancy announcements, schedule and conduct pre-employment testing and assist in employment interview process.
- Enters, updates and maintains employee data in information system; assists in streamlining processes and data collection procedures.
- May serve as open records custodian.
- Prepares and routes documents, certifications, meeting minutes, forms, correspondence, and information tracking documents; monitors and maintains schedules, files, logs, reports, and records; processes and distributes forms, applications and documents.
- Monitors and maintains office supplies, inventory and equipment needs; initiates purchase requisitions and tracks orders.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and 3 years of office/human resource related experience; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above, unless otherwise subject to any other requirements set forth in law or regulation.
Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Education and training; Human Resource principles and practices; Program administration principles; Customer service principles; Mathematical concepts; Research methods; Database and records management principles; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Providing customer service; Responding to information requests and providing specialized administrative support; Researching and verifying information; Compiling data and processing timekeeping information; Scheduling and coordinating appointments; Filing, organizing, imaging and maintaining records and files; Preparing reports, minutes, correspondence and documentation; Managing time and prioritizing requests; Proofreading documents and forms for accuracy and completion; Performing audits, identifying errors, making corrections and recommendations; Reviewing and researching database information; Monitoring and maintaining supplies; Maintaining confidentiality of records and employment information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid Driver's License with appropriate class.

Physical Demands: Occasional lifting of objects, Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS
CUC-RSOQ-22-028

Design, Construction Management, and Other Professional Services for Various CUC Water and Wastewater Projects on the Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting Statement of Qualifications from qualified architecture & engineering (A&E) firms for the design of various water and wastewater infrastructure including but not limited to water distribution and transmission main, sewer main (gravity and pressure), sewer manholes, sewer lift stations, water booster pump stations, water storage reservoirs, water treatment systems, wastewater treatment systems, upgrades to existing water and wastewater facilities; providing archaeological and UXO studies and monitoring, providing biological assessments, providing project management services, providing construction management services including but not limited to submittal review, clarification and technical assistance related to contract plans and specifications, field engineering due to changes in conditions during construction, construction inspection, review of partial payment requests, surveying, and other related engineering services on various CUC Water and Wastewater Projects.

The proposed projects are funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and all future Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, ARPA funded grants, EDA grants, DOI/OIA grants, Saipan Local Appropriations, and FEMA grants. All work is subject to grantors approval.

The RSOQ package will be provided via email to the registered email ID upon completion of registration at the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the SOQ must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RSOQ 22-028, Request for Statement of Qualifications"* to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No.3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O.Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on July 13, 2022**. Statements of Qualifications mailed via postal or courier service must be received or postmarked on or before due date and time. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A&E firms are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the A&E firms due to lack of information or understanding of the RSOQ requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a SOQ under the contract.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible/qualified A&E firms who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. A&E firms shall be accorded fair and equal during discussions; there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

This RSOQ does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of statements of qualifications in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC procurement regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable federal regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on June 21, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Water/Wastewater Chief Engineer via email address larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all Statement of Qualifications for any reason and to waive any defects in said RSOQ, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All Statement of Qualifications shall become the property of CUC.

CHRETIEN T. VOERG
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A devastating defeat for the rights of women

Overturning Roe v. Wade is not the first time the Supreme Court has driven a dagger into the heart of human rights and further divided a deeply troubled nation. But not since the 19th century have there been other decisions so dreadfully indefensible and consequential.

Friday's announcement in the Mississippi abortion case, no less shocking for having been leaked months ago, is a new chapter in infamy, as pernicious as Dred Scott v. Sandford in 1857 and Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896.

Dred Scott brought on the Civil War, holding that Blacks could not be citizens, with no rights worthy of respect, and that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories. Plessy condoned separate but equal and legalized much of slavery under the guise of Jim Crow. Millions suffered, and still suffer, from the lingering consequences.

Now the court has ruled that women—more than half of our population—have no rights that politicians or judges are bound to respect other than perhaps the right to vote, which is specified in the Constitution. More than half the states are expected to ban abortion entirely. Thirteen of

See WOMEN on Next Page

Picky eater

By LEMUSU KIT A TO'OMATA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The following is the second-place winner in the My Marianas Writing Contest of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council. It is being reprinted here at the request of the council. The first-place winning essay was published yesterday, June 28, 2022.

I often think about how life catches up to us without much warning or hesitation. One moment we're with our families, catching up on the latest news we read in the Saipan Tribune or Marianas Variety; telling stories about the chismis [gossip] we heard from a friend of a friend, and even playing cards like Crazy 8 and Guts. Ironic how the next moment, we're busy with school, work, catching up on sleep, extra-curricular activities and whatnot and go days without a genuine conversation. And these moments, honestly, can drag out much longer than the first. Admittedly, my family and I are a part of this instance. Life just... happens, y'know? Sometimes we don't think about spending time together because we're so busy living our lives—outside of the family. But what is a life to live without your family?

Ever since I was young, the cultural values and beliefs instilled in me by my mom, indigenous to the island of Saipan, and my dad, indigenous to the island of Samoa, have shaped my views on family. They're traditional. For example, one of the views I have is that, regardless of the differences we all have, we are one; regardless of the distance that separates us, we are one. Family is family, always and do not forget that. One of the ways that we connect together is by cooking and eating the delicious food that we sit down and share together as a family. Cooking is a team effort, but in my household, a family effort, that bears the fruits of our labor. It's the simplest task one can do to contribute to the family, even if it means just washing the dishes or lowering the stove temperature. It's about being together, helping each other, and sharing the blessing of the meal with one another.

Now one of the biggest struggles any islander can have is called, in Chamorro, being chacha . This translates to being "picky" or selective. Now guess who's the chacha one in my family, that unintentionally decides to make life a little bit more restricted? Yeah, you're listening to her right now. Guilty as charged. Unfortunately, my biggest curse is being the pickiest eater probably in the entire Saipan. As an 18-year-old high [school] student, I still love what my parents called "western" food such as chicken nuggets, french fries, cheeseburgers, fried chicken and pizza. I think I'm the only person who would go to a Japanese restaurant and look for a cheeseburger option. So, can you imagine my home life as a picky eater. Most local dishes I don't eat, but I appreciate it nonetheless. I've been a part of making many of these dishes at home, such as chicken kelaguen, kadun pika, tinaktak and the effort and time put into making these dishes deserve a standing ovation.

As for me and my family, we love making simple foods that both accommodate my chacha-ness, and that also allow each of us to have a task. This food is simply called: kangkong with gisa tuna (water spinach with sautéed tuna). Just the title itself makes my mouth watery. It's not your typical dish that one may think brings a family together, but this just pushes the right buttons for ours. It's an automatic response, with our roles already embedded. When my older sister comes home from work and asks, "What' s for dinner?" I would jokingly respond "kangkong, again." Boom, that' s the catalyst. My parents would then share a glance and roll their eyes as we all know that, in fact, it will be our dinner again. Cue the automatic roles. My dad goes out to the garden, right outside our kitchen window, and begins to pick the kangkong plants along the marsh. I grab the pot in the kitchen and follow closely behind him. He tosses the vegetable into the pot as we catch up about our day: his about work and how, at the strong age of 62, he's still able to do laborious tasks, and mine about school, upcoming graduation plans and my clubs that I join. Cut to my mom and sister, who are in the kitchen preparing the spices, the tuna and the complementary vegetables. From the window, we hear my sister talk about her new job and my mom about the newest movie she just watched on Netflix. I find myself smiling because of how easily we slipped into our roles, meaning that we easily found the time to talk to each other and spend it together.

The process of making this deliciously simple dish is not too complicated for one to follow. After my dad and I return from picking the kangkong, we sit down at the kitchen table and start to "refine" our picks: meaning that we thoroughly inspect and clean

See PICKY on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

False rumor

Someone has been passing false rumors on Tinian that I hope you will help put to an end.

The rumor is that the construction of the Air Force Divert Facility on West Field will eventually mean military personnel will be permanently stationed on Tinian. That is not true.

There is no plan by any of the services within the U.S. Department of Defense to station any troops on Tinian other than for training exercises.

The Divert Facility is only a parking lot for giant Air Force jet-powered refueling aircraft. They will land on the current Tinian Commuter Terminal main runway. They will then taxi to the new Divert Facility and park their aircraft. They will bring with them an aircraft maintenance crew that will service the aircraft on Tinian. There will be no lodging or other facilities on the Divert Facility for the aircraft crew. All will stay at lodging being constructed in San Jose Village. They will then conduct practice missions from Tinian, returning to the Divert Facility. When the two-week training period is over, they will return to their home base and the parking lot will be empty. Private firms may provide security for the facility, as well as grounds maintenance.

The Divert Facility will provide no further funding to the CNMI, other than the $21 million that has already been paid to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

When construction of the Divert Facility is complete, the contractors and their employees will return to from whence they came.

Don A. Farrell
Marpo Heights, Tinian

'Best team ever'

Congratulations to the CNMI baseball team! True grit! The veterans from the silver medal team from the Yap Micro Games wanted to redeem themselves as they were the best team. It's sweeter winning at home and the younger kids got to see how the games should be played. There is a saying in sports, "Protect the house at all cost." Bob Coldeen needs to add a chapter to his baseball book and proclaim these guys as the "best team ever." They are now local baseball legends. This team epitomizes all the values we want athletes to show. This is also credited to the CNMI youth baseball development program and all the coaches, parents, volunteers, umpires, administrators who gave their time to the sport.

Ed Temengil
via email

WOMEN

From Page 8

them have "trigger" laws in place.

The decision is particularly astonishing because as Chief Justice John Roberts pointed out, the court could have upheld Mississippi's law without overturning Roe. What it did was judicial activism at its wildest, utterly violating what judicial conservatives claim to believe and what the court has long practiced.

Moreover, as the three dissenters warned, other vital precedents are now vulnerable, notably the 1965 decision in Griswold v. Connecticut overturning a state ban on contraception. That established the constitutional right of privacy on which Roe was based eight years later.

More recent decisions ending sodomy laws and legalizing same-sex marriage are likely endangered, too, considering the court's flagrant disrespect for settled law that unsettles religious zealots.

The most radical of the reactionary justices, Clarence Thomas, said outright in his concurring opinion that Griswold and the others should be reconsidered. It's odd he didn't mention Loving v. Virginia, which outlawed bans on interracial marriages—like his own. But if the others are imperiled, logically so is that.

Friday's decision will prevent only legal, safe abortions. Women with enough time and money to travel to states like California will still obtain them. Those who can't will bear children whom they can't afford to care for properly or obtain abortions under life-threatening conditions.

In some states, women will be forced to bear a rapist's child, or their own father's.

As Justice Stephen Breyer's dissent made plain, "Across a vast array of circumstances, a state will be able to impose its moral choice on a woman and coerce her to give birth to a child."

Afghanistan's Taliban have American counterparts. The coat hangers and back-alley butchers are back.

They're not back in Florida—yet. In 1989, the Florida Supreme Court established abortion as a protected right under Florida's constitutional privacy provision.

But with a state court that refuses to respect other precedents, abortion rights are imperiled in Florida. The Legislature can't be trusted to respect the privacy provision and neither can Gov. Ron DeSantis, the right-wing social warrior.

In praising the Mississippi decision Friday, DeSantis said Florida will "continue to defend its recently enacted pro-life reforms against state court challenges, will work to expand pro-life protections and will stand for life by promoting adoption, foster care and child welfare." That means he wants more than Florida's recent ban on abortion after 15 weeks.

All of this calls to mind the one right we mentioned earlier—the right to vote. Although it has been true that the Supreme Court often follows election returns, the justices may be counting on the economy commanding most people's attention these days. From that perspective, this was a safe time to repeal basic human rights. It shouldn't be.

Florida women and the men who love them are entitled to hold it against Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott and for voting to confirm untrustworthy Justices Brett Kavanaugh, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett, who had professed under oath to respect settled precedents. Rubio, who's seeking reelection in November, quickly praised the court's diabolical decision.

Floridians should also hold it against DeSantis, who's also up for reelection this fall, for appointing four far-right justices to the Florida Supreme Court. Abortion rights are not safe with them, either. Elections matter.

One of the singularly ominous aspects of Justice Samuel Alito's anti-abortion decision echoes the rationale of Thomas' majority opinion the day before against New York's gun licensing law. Both rely heavily on ancient legislative history, as if present-day realities were inconsequential.

As Breyer pointed out, "Because laws in 1868 deprived women of any control of their bodies, the majority approves states doing so today. … Today's decision strips women of agency over what even the majority agrees is a contested and contestable moral issue."

Until recently, the Supreme Court regarded the Constitution as a living document written with the future in mind; as a framework for a new nation. Alito, Thomas and their fellow travelers are hellbent on turning it into a straitjacket, and they are well on their way to succeeding.

It will be difficult for Congress to do much about the Supreme Court, considering the paralyzing influence of the filibuster, the questionable alternative of packing the court with additional seats, and the difficulty of amending the Constitution. But the necessary debates must begin. The present Supreme Court is untenable.

There needs to be a constitutional amendment to protect abortion rights and enshrine personal privacy as a human right. No matter the difficulty, that battle begins now. The 2022 election is more important than ever.

© 2022 *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*

PICKY

From Page 8

it of any dead or dry leaves and extra-long stems, with a satisfying tsk sound at every snap of the stem. Sometimes my dad and I compete to see who can make the most tsk sounds from the stems. I glance over and see my sister straining the oil from the canned tuna and hear her loud ugh as she examines the still extremely oily bowl of tuna. I shake my head and think to myself: maybe next time, sis. My mom is at the counter cutting the onions into thin slices, with the cloves of garlic up next on the chopping block. She chops them into small cubes, so small that ants may be able to pick it up and have it as a meal. I appreciate the conversations we have together during this preparation. It's the family time that I miss the most and that often gets cut short on a daily basis when we're not cooking together. I cherish these moments of hearing my dad's booming laughter, my mom's sarcastic humor, and my sister's loud mouth. Oftentimes, I'm quiet, observing these moments, wishing that they could extend longer and longer.

Now comes the best part of making the dish: cooking it. My mom takes the refined pot of kangkong and begins to wash it while my dad prepares our good ol' frying pan and lights the gas stove on medium heat. He takes a little bit of vegetable oil and lightly drizzles it on the pan, which meets together with a light hs-ing sound. Music to my ears. I, being deathly afraid of hot cooking oil, observe from an extremely obnoxious distance as my dad dumps the onions and garlic into the pan, increasing the volume of the hs-ing sound. The aroma of caramelized onions and garlic fill the kitchen and my stomach begins to rumble. Soon, I tell myself. Here comes my sister, still unsatisfied with her attempt of cleaning the tuna, scooping the mashed tuna into the hot sizzling pan. My mom swoops in and does a similar dunk of the kangkong into the pan and immediately covers it with a glass lid. We see the kangkong shrivel up in about a minute and that's the cue to remove the lid. My mom grabs the giant big silver spoon and starts to mix and sauté the kangkong together with the tuna, onions and garlic. This is the gisa part of the dish. Now that the hot cooking oil isn't as threatening, my part comes in (and in my opinion, the best part). I grab the Kikkoman soy sauce and go to town with it. I pour the soy sauce around the kangkong mix and once again, hear a lighter tone of the hs-ing sound. The smell in the kitchen is immaculate: he sizzling caramelized onions, the hint of garlic, the cooked tuna and fresh kangkong fill my lungs. My mom turns off the stove and puts the lid back on once more. My dad, sister, and I all start taking out the rice pot, plates, and utensils and drinks to the outside porch and eating area. As we await the grand entrance of the kangkong with gisa tuna, our mouths are watering and stomachs rumbling. Our mom comes out, with the holy grail in hand. I swear, I can hear a choir in the distance as she gently puts the pan on tablecloth in front of us. We put our plates: hot rice, soy sauce, kangkong with gisa tuna on top. Bam! That's the meal.

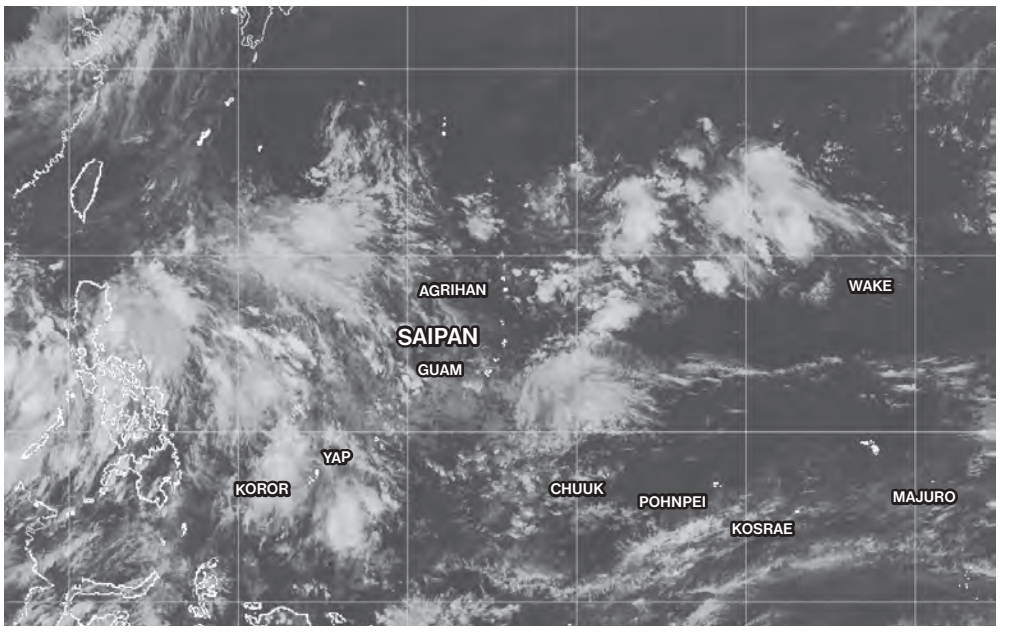
It's amazing what influence food has on your family. Even more so the influence it has on a picky eater. I'm grateful that the one it has on ours is a positive one, full of quality time spent together. This dish, kangkong with gisa tuna, in particular is a nostalgic dish that our family shares an instant bond with. I'd say that it brings us together because of how simple it is: made from five ingredients that we usually already have in our home, and with a preparation and cooking time that both doesn't feel like we're "cheating" ourselves from making a good home-made meal, and doesn't take too long to the point where we're "hangry" (hungry and angry) with each other. It's also a dish that provides us comfort; we all have our unspoken roles and ease into them, with no problem. There's no competition as to who's doing what, where, and why. It's a familiar feeling for us, and that's what family is: familiar . Even though our lives often catch up to us, we are always reminded that there can never be enough time in this world to spend with your family. Food is that reminder for us. It brings us back down to earth. Simple tasks, completed with great intentions, often bear the best rewards. This reward is spending quality time with my family. What is a life to live without family?

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.
86º 79º	86º 77º	86º 76º	87º 78º	87º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:42 AM, TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows numerous showers moving into the Guam waters, with isolated showers moving through the CNMI waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	83° / 76°
Yap	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:49 AM	6:51 PM
Thursday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:35 AM	7:05 PM	-
Thursday	6:26 AM	7:54 PM	-
Friday	7:18 AM	8:40 PM	-
Saturday	8:10 AM	9:23 PM	-
Sunday	9:01 AM	10:03 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Rain	58° / 50°
Beijing	Thunderstorms	81° / 71°
Hong Kong	Isolated Thunderstorms	89° / 81°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	85° / 74°
London	Light Rain	71° / 55°
Los Angeles	Cloudy	89° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	53° / 43°
Miami	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
New York	Mostly Sunny	81° / 65°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	91° / 77°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	80° / 58°
Busan	Thunderstorms	78° / 74°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	91° / 67°
Salem	Thunderstorms	90° / 73°
San Francisco	Sunny	69° / 53°
Seoul	Thunderstorms	78° / 74
Tokyo	Showers	92° / 78°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	83° / 65°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:10 AM	Low Tide	1.48
6:33 AM	High Tide	1.90
2:09 PM	Low Tide	-0.07
9:33 PM	High Tide	1.94

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	6:30PM	7:15PM	6

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	8:00AM	Daily
UA193	7:05PM	10:55PM	5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	3:30PM	7:25PM	6
RS112	3:45PM	7:30PM	3, 6
7C3405	3:50PM	7:45PM	3
OZ624	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	2:00PM	5:20PM	7
7C3451	3:00PM	6:20PM	3
BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
UA112	4:40PM	5:30PM	6

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:00PM	4:00AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	5 via Palau
UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

A184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1,2,3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
RS111	8:45AM	2:05PM	3, 6
7C3406	8:50AM	2:30PM	3
TW9307	9:00AM	2:30PM	4, 6, 7
OZ623	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
TW9307	9:15AM	2:30PM	3

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	8:00AM	1:00PM	7
BX621	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7
7C3452	9:00AM	2:00PM	3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Some cities nix July 4 fireworks for shortages, fire dangers

PHOENIX (AP)—The skies over a scattering of Western U.S. cities will stay dark for the third consecutive Fourth of July as some major fireworks displays are canceled again this year—some over wildfire concerns amid dry weather and others because of enduring pandemic-related staffing and supply chain issues.

Phoenix canceled its three major Independence Day displays because it couldn't obtain professional-grade fireworks. Shows in several other cities around Phoenix are still on.

"Unless you're in a really remote area where that was the only show, most people will be able to find a show nearby," said Julie Heckman, executive director of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

Overseas shipping, transportation in the U.S., rising insurance costs and labor shortages have led to the canceled displays, along with demand for fireworks shows at concerts, sports stadiums and the Fourth of July holiday that largely were absent during the first two years of the pandemic, Heckman said.

"The demand is so high that it's almost like a perfect storm," Heckman said, adding that not having enough crew to work the shows or rental trucks to transport materials have added to the crunch.

China produces most of the professional-grade fireworks that shoot up into the air and produce colorful, dazzling bursts in various shapes. The shortage doesn't lie in manufacturing, Heckman said, but in congestion at U.S. ports.

Heckman said some companies recently chartered about a dozen vessels, each carrying 200-250 containers of consumer-grade fireworks that are considered hazardous material, and shipped them to ports in Alabama and Louisiana to free up space at ports on the West Coast.

Other cities around the country are halting the displays because of the threat of wildfire. Flagstaff in northern Arizona will carry out its annual Independence Day parade through the city's historic downtown, but a new laser light show will replace the standard pyrotechnic display.

Three large wildfires skirted the mountainous city this spring alone, prompting hundreds of people to evacuate, closing down a major highway and destroying some homes.

"The decision was made early because we wanted people to be able to make plans with their families," said Flagstaff city spokesperson Sarah Langley.

Many local jurisdictions have banned the use of fireworks amid a punishing drought, even with an early start of the annual rainy season that already has led to flooding in the U.S. Southwest. Fireworks always are prohibited in national forests.

A popular northern San Joaquin Valley fireworks show that in pre-pandemic times brought tens of thousands of people to Lake Don Pedro, California, also was canceled because of drought concerns, including the lake's projected low level.

"The safety of our guests and being good stewards of the land entrusted to us are our highest priorities," the Don Pedro Recreation Agency said in a statement.

Lompoc on California's central coast and Castle Rock in Colorado canceled their pyrotechnic displays over worries about wildfires. Still, an Independence Eve fireworks show with live music by the Colorado Symphony is planned July 3 at Denver's Civic Center Park.

In New Mexico, the most destructive wildfire season in modern history won't stop that state's major cities, including Albuquerque and Santa Fe, from holding Fourth of July fireworks displays under fire department supervision.

As COVID fears ebb, Japan readies for tourists from abroad

TOKYO (AP)—The rickshaw men in Tokyo are adding English-speaking staff, a sure sign Japan is bracing for a return of tourists from abroad.

Japan's border controls to curb the spread of coronavirus infections began gradually loosening earlier this month.

That's great news for Yusuke Otomo, owner of Daikichi, a kimono rental shop in Asakusa, an old district of Tokyo famous for its temples, quaint restaurants and rickshaw rides. He can barely contain his excitement.

"Those were a hard three years. But we managed to endure until today. And after such an experience, to think people from abroad can finally come back is simply thrilling," Otomo told The Associated Press.

AP

A rickshaw puller carries his customers around Tokyo's Asakusa area famous for sightseeing, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

"I'm thinking that maybe, just as before COVID, my shop, the city of Asakusa and everyone's hearts can flourish again. I can't wait."

Before the pandemic, Asakusa was so brimming with foreigners they sometimes outnumbered the Japanese. After the coronavirus struck, the streets were deserted.

"Not a soul in sight," he said sadly.

Some kimono rental stores folded. Restaurants were shuttered.

The crowds are finally back with a gradual relaxing of the city's COVID-19 restrictions, which called for restaurants to close early and people to social distance and limit attendance at events. But most of the visitors are Japanese.

Shuso Imada, general manager at JSS Information Center, a sake and shochu showroom in downtown Tokyo, said he has been feeling pretty lonely and is itching to tell foreign visitors about how to match the traditional Japanese rice wine with all kinds of non-Japanese food, even cheese and beef.

"In a way, we didn't have much to do and we just had to wait. The gates have now reopened," he said.

But like others waiting for tourists, he acknowledged that the limited entry for tour groups now in effect may not allow time for a relaxing visit to his center.

Instagram, Facebook remove posts offering abortion pills

WASHINGTON (AP)—Facebook and Instagram have begun promptly removing posts that offer abortion pills to women who may not be able to access them following a Supreme Court decision that stripped away constitutional protections for the procedure.

Such social media posts ostensibly aimed to help women living in states where preexisting laws banning abortion suddenly snapped into effect on Friday. That's when the high court overruled Roe v. Wade, its 1973 decision that declared access to abortion a constitutional right.

Memes and status updates explaining how women could legally obtain abortion pills in the mail exploded across social platforms. Some even offered to mail the prescriptions to women living in states that now ban the procedure.

Almost immediately, Facebook and Instagram began removing some of these posts, just as millions across the U.S. were searching for clarity around abortion access. General mentions of abortion pills, as well as posts mentioning specific versions such as mifepristone and misoprostol, suddenly spiked Friday morning across Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and TV broadcasts, according to an analysis by the media intelligence firm Zignal Labs.

By Sunday, Zignal had counted more than 250,000 such mentions.

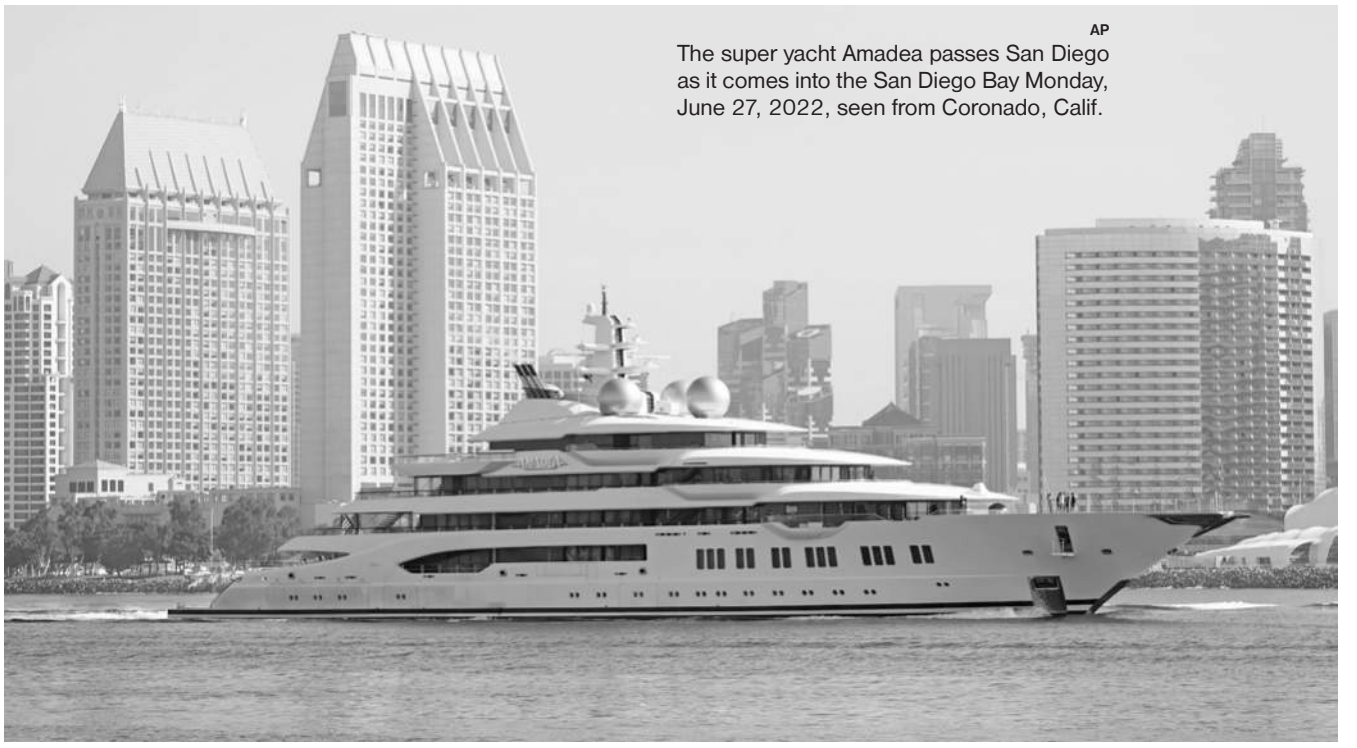
The AP obtained a screenshot on Friday of one Instagram post from a woman who offered to purchase or forward abortion pills through the mail, minutes after the court ruled to overturn the constitutional right to an abortion.

"DM me if you want to order abortion pills, but want them sent to my address instead of yours," the post on Instagram read.

Instagram took it down within moments. Vice Media first reported on Monday that Meta, the parent of both Facebook and Instagram, was taking down posts about abortion pills.

On Monday, an AP reporter tested how the company would respond to a similar post on Facebook, writing: "If you send me your address, I will mail you abortion pills."

Russian superyacht seized by US arrives in San Diego Bay



AP

The super yacht Amadea passes San Diego as it comes into the San Diego Bay Monday, June 27, 2022, seen from Coronado, Calif.

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A $325 million superyacht seized by the United States from a sanctioned Russian oligarch arrived in San Diego Bay on Monday.

The 348-foot-long (106-meter-long) Amadea flew an American flag as it sailed past the retired aircraft carrier USS Midway and under the Coronado Bridge.

The Department of Justice said the Amadea was safely docked after a transpacific journey of over 5,000 miles (8,047 kilometers) "and will remain in the custody of the U.S. government, pending its anticipated forfeiture and sale."

The FBI linked the Amadea to the Russian oligarch Suleiman Kerimov, and the vessel became a target of Task Force KleptoCapture, launched in March to seize the assets of Russian oligarchs to put pressure on Russia to end the war in Ukraine.

The U.S. said Kerimov secretly bought the vessel last year through various shell companies.

The U.S. won a legal battle in Fiji to take the Cayman Islands-flagged superyacht earlier this month. The Amadea made a stop in Honolulu Harbor en route to the U.S. mainland.

"The successful seizure and transport of Amadea would not have been possible without extraordinary cooperation from our foreign partners in the global effort to enforce U.S. sanctions imposed in response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war in Ukraine," the Justice Department said.

Nation

46 dead after trailer carrying migrants found in San Antonio

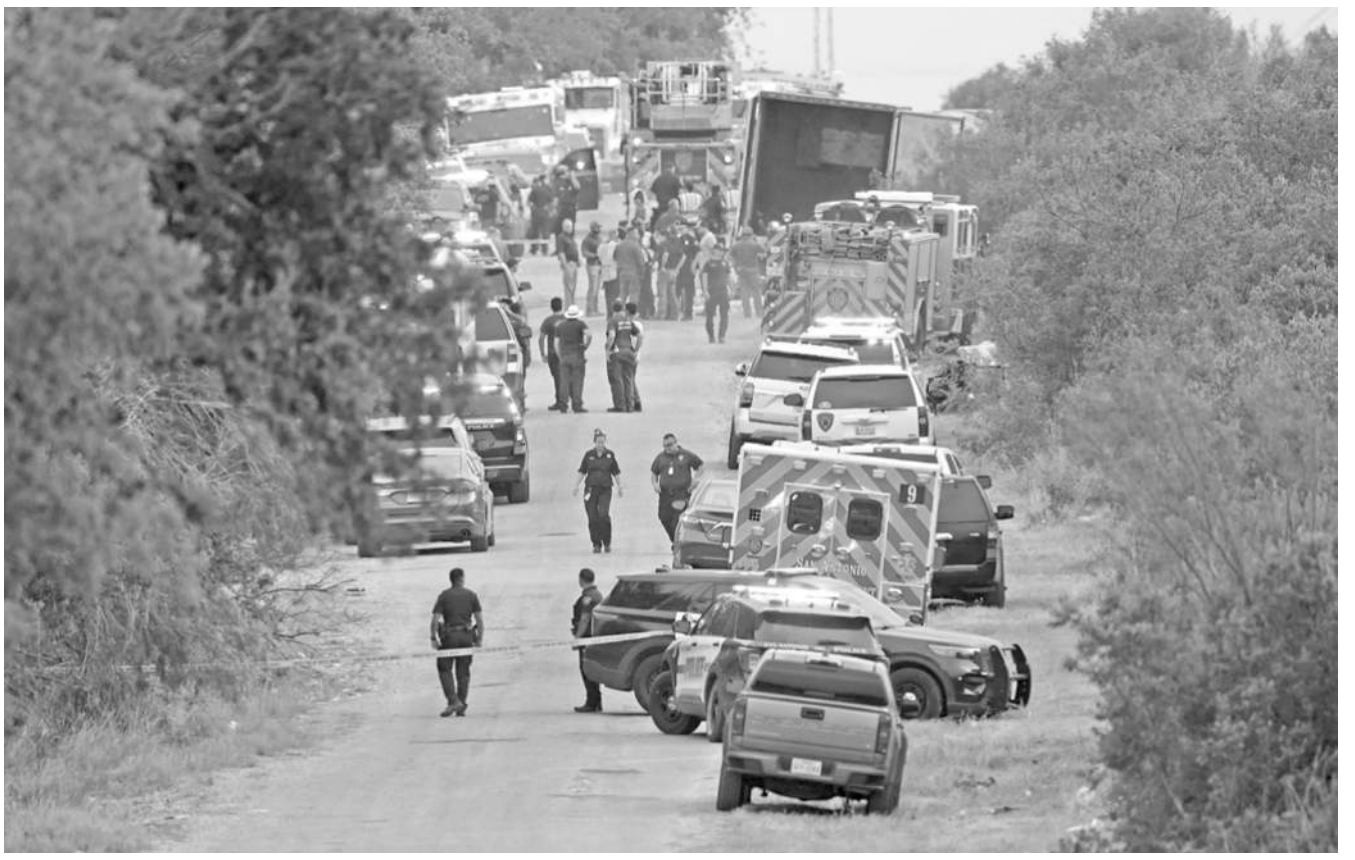
SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Forty-six people were found dead in and near a tractor-trailer and 16 others were taken to hospitals in a presumed migrant smuggling attempt into the United States, officials in San Antonio said.

It's among the deadliest tragedies to have claimed thousands of lives of people attempting to cross the U.S. border from Mexico in recent decades. Ten migrants died in 2017 after being trapped inside a truck that was parked at a Walmart in San Antonio. In 2003, 19 migrants were found in a sweltering truck southeast of San Antonio.

South Texas has long been the busiest area for illegal border crossings. Migrants ride in vehicles though Border Patrol checkpoints to San Antonio, the closest major city, from which point they disperse across the United States.

A city worker at the scene on a remote back road in southwest San Antonio was alerted to the situation by a cry for help shortly before 6 p.m. Monday, Police Chief William McManus said. Officers arrived to find a body on the ground outside the trailer and a partially opened gate to the trailer, he said.

Hours later, body bags lay spread on the ground near the trailer as a grim symbol of the calamity. Bodies still remained inside.



AP

Police work the scene where dozens of people were found dead in a semitrailer in a remote area in southwestern San Antonio, Monday, June 27, 2022.

Of the 16 taken to hospitals with heat-related illnesses, 12 were adults and four were children, said Fire Chief Charles Hood. The patients were hot to the touch and dehydrated, and no water was found in the trailer, he said.

"They were suffering from heat stroke and exhaustion," Hood said. "It was a refrigerated tractor-trailer, but there was no visible working AC unit on that rig."

San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg said the 46 who died had "families who were likely trying to find a better life."

"This is nothing short of a horrific human tragedy," Nirenberg said.

Those in the trailer were part of a presumed migrant smuggling attempt into the United States, and the investigation was being led by U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, McManus said.

Three people were taken into custody, but it was unclear if they were absolutely connected with human trafficking, McManus said.

Big rigs emerged as a popular smuggling method in the early 1990s amid a surge in U.S. border enforcement in San Diego and El Paso, Texas, which were then the busiest corridors for illegal crossings.

Before that, people paid small fees to mom-and-pop operators to get them across a largely unguarded border. As crossing became exponentially more difficult after the 2001 terror attacks in the U.S., migrants were led through more perilous terrain and paid thousands of dollars more.

Supreme Court backs coach in praying on field after games

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court said Monday that a high school football coach who knelt and prayed on the field after games was protected by the Constitution, a decision that opponents said would open the door to "much more coercive prayer" in public schools.

The court ruled 6-3 for the coach with the conservative justices in the majority and the liberals in dissent. The case was the latest in a line of rulings for religious plaintiffs.

The case forced the justices to wrestle with how to balance the religious and free speech rights of teachers and coaches with the rights of students not to feel pressured into participating in religious practices. The liberal justices in the minority said there was evidence that Bremerton (Washington) High School Coach Joseph Kennedy's prayers at the 50-yard-line had a coercive effect on students and allowed him to incorporate his "personal religious beliefs into a school event."

Dissenting Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that the decision "sets us further down a perilous path in forcing states to entangle themselves with religion."

But the justices in the majority emphasized that the coach's prayers came after the games were over and at a time when he wasn't responsible for students and was free to do other things.

The coach and his attorneys at First Liberty Institute, a Christian legal group, were among those cheering the decision. Kennedy said in an interview that his first reaction was one of pure joy.

"Just like in all my football games I just threw my arms up, you know, 'touchdown,'" he said. He described the seven years since the dispute began as tough on his family but "absolutely worth it."

Justice Neil Gorsuch, writing for the majority in the ruling, declared, "The Constitution and the best of our traditions counsel mutual respect and tolerance, not censorship and suppression, for religious and nonreligious views alike.

3 killed, dozens hurt in Amtrak train crash in Missouri

MENDON, Mo. (AP)—An Amtrak passenger train traveling from Los Angeles to Chicago struck a dump truck Monday in a remote area of Missouri, killing three people and injuring dozens more as rail cars tumbled off the tracks and landed on their sides, officials said.

Two of those killed were on the train and one was in the truck, Missouri State Highway Patrol spokesman Cpl. Justin Dunn said. It was not immediately clear exactly how many people were hurt, the patrol said, but hospitals reported receiving more than 40 patients from the crash and were expecting more.

Amtrak's Southwest Chief was carrying about 207 passengers and crew members when the collision happened near Mendon at a rural intersection on a gravel road with no lights or electronic controls, according to the highway patrol. Officials were still trying to determine the exact number of people aboard. Seven cars derailed, the patrol said.

Rob Nightingale said he was dozing off in his sleeper compartment when the lights flickered and the train rocked back and forth.

"It was like slow motion. Then all of a sudden I felt it tip my way. I saw the ground coming toward my window, and all the debris and dust," Nightingale told The Associated Press. "Then it sat on its side and it was complete silence. I sat there and didn't hear anything. Then I heard a little girl next door crying."

Nightingale was unhurt and he and other passengers were able to climb out of the overturned train car through a window.

The collision broke the dump truck apart, he said.

"It was all over the tracks," said Nightingale, an art gallery owner from Taos, New Mexico, who said he rides Amtrak regularly to Chicago.

It's too early to speculate on why the truck was on the tracks, said National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy. A team of NTSB investigators will arrive Tuesday, she said. Trains won't be able to run on the track for "a matter of days" while they gather evidence, she added.

ACROSS THE NATION

Jan. 6 panel to hold surprise hearing, present new evidence

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House panel investigating the U.S. Capitol insurrection is holding a surprise hearing on Tuesday with an unidentified witness, cloaking the last-minute proceedings in extraordinary secrecy and raising expectations for new bombshells in the sweeping investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack. The unexpected hearing, scheduled for 1 p.m. Tuesday, was announced with 24 hours' notice while lawmakers are away from Washington on a two-week recess. The committee had said last week that there would be no more hearings until July. The subject of the hearings is so far unclear, but the panel's announcement on Monday said it would be "to present recently obtained evidence and receive witness testimony."

Biden suspends rules limiting immigrant arrest, deportation

BOSTON (AP)—The Biden administration, reacting to a federal court ruling in Texas, has suspended an order that had focused resources for the arrest and deportation of immigrants on those who are considered a threat to public safety and national security. The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement Saturday it will abide by the decision issued this month, even though it "strongly disagrees" and is appealing it. Immigrant advocates and experts on Monday said the suspension of Biden's order will only sow fear among immigrant communities. Many living in the country illegally will now be afraid to leave their homes out of concern they'll be detained, even if they're otherwise law-abiding, said Steve Yale-Loehr, an immigration law professor at Cornell University. Prioritizing whom to arrest and deport is a necessity, he said.

Man acquitted of murder because of insanity escapes hospital

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—A man acquitted by reason of insanity of murder in the 2013 stabbing death of his father in Austin has escaped from a state hospital to which he was committed, authorities said Monday. Staff at the North Texas State Hospital in Vernon, near the Oklahoma border and 190 miles (306 kilometers) northwest of Dallas, advised police that Alexander Scott Ervin, 29, was found missing from the hospital shortly after 7:30 a.m. Monday, the Vernon Police Department reported. A review of the hospital's security video revealed that Ervin left his dormitory room about 9 p.m. Sunday and scaled the hospital's 8-foot security fence before heading north on foot about 9:15 p.m. Ervin was to be considered armed and dangerous, police said.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Antonio Flores Kaipat

SEPTEMBER 5,1947 - JUNE 26, 2022

Antonio Flores Kaipat of Chalan Kiya was called home by our heavenly father In his new life Antonio will be met at the gates of Heaven by his Parents: Jose Iguel Kaipat & Soledad Flores Kaipat

Brothers and Sisters/in-laws: Mariana Kaipat Mendiola & Ricardo T. Mendiola, Teresa Kaipat Concepcion & Enrique Concepcion; Isaac Flores Kaipat; Vicente Flores Kaipat; Juan Flores Kaipat

Antonio's love and memories will be missed and forever cherished in the hearts of his

Wife: Rowena Morales Kaipat

Daughter: Solwena Antonette Morales Kaipat

Numerous Cousins, Nieces, Nephews and Friends will also miss him Last Respects and Viewing will be announced at a later date.

Your thoughts, prayers, words of comfort and presence are sincerely appreciated. Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghilisou, Kinisou Chapur, and Thank you.

The Family

Asia

Int'l court prosecutor wants to reactivate probe on Philippines

BRUSSELS (AP)—The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has asked judges for authorization to resume his investigation "as quickly as possible" into the so-called war on drugs in the Philippines.

Judges last September authorized Prosecutor Karim Khan to investigate alleged crimes against humanity between Nov. 1, 2011 and March 16, 2019, linked to the deadly crackdown.

However, the probe was suspended last November after the Philippines said in a letter to ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan that it already is investigating the crimes and so the international court doesn't have jurisdiction.

"The court may only exercise jurisdiction where national legal systems fail to do so, which is certainly not the case in the Philippines," the letter said, citing domestic investigations.

However, Khan has now sought to resume his probe, saying in a statement that "I have concluded that the deferral requested by the Philippines is not warranted, and that the investigation should resume as quickly as possible."

More than 6,000 mostly poor drug suspects have been killed, according to government pronouncements, but human rights groups say the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen who may have been deployed by police.

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has defended the crackdown as "lawfully directed against drug lords and pushers who have for many years destroyed the present generation, especially the youth."

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings of drug suspects although he has openly threatened suspects with death and has ordered police to shoot suspects who dangerously resist arrest.

The ICC is a court of last resort for cases that countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute. Under the court's rules, a country can request deferral of an investigation if it is already investigating the crimes.

Biden aims at China in new illegal fishing policy framework

LISBON, Portugal (AP)—The Biden administration is stepping up efforts to combat illegal fishing by China, ordering federal agencies to better coordinate among themselves as well as with foreign partners in a bid to promote sustainable exploitation of the world's oceans.

On Monday, the White House released its first ever National Security memo on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, or IUU, to coincide with the start of a United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

Nearly 11% of total U.S. seafood imports in 2019 worth $2.4 billion came from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, according to the U.S. International Trade Commission, a federal agency.

While China isn't named in the lengthy policy framework, language in it left little doubt where it was aimed. The memo is bound to irritate Beijing at a time of growing geopolitical competition between the two countries. China is a dominant seafood processor and through state loans and fuel subsidies has built the world's largest distant water fishing fleet, with thousands of floating fish factories spread across Asia, Africa and the Americas.

Specifically, the memo directs 21 federal departments and agencies to better share information, coordinate enforcement actions such as sanctions and visa restrictions and promote best practices among international allies.

It will also be followed in coming days by new rules from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration expanding the definition of illegal fishing to include related labor abuses, a first step to the eventual blacklisting of flag states that fail to comply.

Biden

Conservation groups praised the effort, which builds on work started under the Obama administration to clean up U.S. seafood supply chains.

"American fishermen have to follow a lot of rules and regulations by the U.S. government," said Beth Lowell, vice president for Oceana, a Washington-based non-profit. "By taking actions against other countries like China that have a poor labor and environmental record, it levels the playing field and that benefits legal fishermen all over the world."

The action plan also calls for expansion of the U.S. seafood import monitoring program, which requires importers to provide documentation from the point of catch to insure that illegally caught fish don't slip into the U.S. Currently, the program only covers about a dozen species. Groups like Oceana have been pushing for the program to cover all imports.

"Until the United States holds all seafood imports to the same standards as U.S.-caught fish, illegally sourced seafood will continue to be sold alongside legal catch," Lowell said.

The action plan also doesn't provide any additional resources to enforce laws already on the books.

"Fighting IUU fishing is resource intensive," said Evan Bloom, a former State Department official who negotiated several international fishing agreements and who now is a senior fellow at the Wilson Center in Washington. "Whether the U.S. really does more may depend on whether NOAA directs more funds to enforcement efforts, intel gathering and inspections."

In Lisbon, where officials and scientists from more than 120 countries were attending the five-day conference, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres criticized some countries—which he did not identify—for looking out for their own economic interests instead of the needs of the entire planet.

"International waters are ours," Guterres insisted, referring to all the planet's inhabitants.

The U.N. is hoping the conference will bring fresh momentum to the protracted efforts for a global ocean agreement that covers conservation efforts on the high seas. Oceans cover some 70% of the earth's surface and provide food and livelihoods for billions of people. Some activists refer to them as the largest unregulated area on the planet.

What's known as the Treaty of the High Seas is being negotiated within the framework of the United Convention on the Law of the Sea, the main international agreement governing maritime activities.

World

Russia missile strike hits a crowded Ukraine mall

KREMENCHUK, Ukraine (AP)—Russian long-range bombers struck a crowded shopping mall in Ukraine's central city of Kremenchuk with a missile on Monday, raising fears of what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an "unimaginable" number of victims in "one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history."

People watch as smoke bellows after a Russian missile strike hit a crowded shopping mall, in Kremenchuk, Ukraine, Monday, June 27, 2022. AP

Zelenskky said that many of the more than 1,000 afternoon shoppers and staff inside the mall managed to escape. Giant plumes of black smoke, dust and orange flames emanated from the wreckage, with emergency crews rushing in to search broken metal and concrete for victims and put out fires. Onlookers watched in distress at the sight of how an everyday activity such as shopping could turn into a horror.

The casualty figures were changing as rescuers searched the smoldering rubble into early Tuesday. Ukraine's emergency services reported late Monday that at least 16 people were dead and about 60 wounded.

Soldiers worked into the night to lug sheets of twisted metal and broken concrete, as one drilled into what remained of the shopping center's roof. Drones whirred above, clouds of dark smoke still emanating from the ruins several hours after the fire had been put out.

"We are working to dismantle the construction so that it is possible to get machinery in there since the metal elements are very heavy and big, and disassembling them by hand is impossible," said Volodymyr Hychkan, an emergency services official.

At Ukraine's request, the U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting in New York on Tuesday to discuss the attack.

In the first Russian government comment on the missile strike, the country's first deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyansky, alleged multiple inconsistencies that he didn't specify, claiming on Twitter that the incident was a provocation by Ukraine. Russia has repeatedly denied it targets civilian infrastructure, even though Russian attacks have hit other shopping malls, theaters, hospitals, kindergartens and apartment buildings.

Toxic gas released in Jordan port kills 13

AMMAN, Jordan (AP)—A crane loading chlorine tanks onto a ship in Jordan's port of Aqaba on Monday dropped one of them, causing an explosion of toxic yellow smoke that killed at least 13 people and sickened some 250, authorities said.

Video carried on state TV showed the moment the tank exploded, sending dockworkers scrambling to escape the toxic cloud. Some 200 people were hospitalized.

The Public Security Directorate, which initially described it as a gas leak, said authorities sealed off the area after evacuating the injured and sent specialists in to address the situation.

State-run Jordan TV said 13 people were killed. Al-Mamlaka TV, another official outlet, said 199 were still being treated in hospitals. The Public Security Directorate said a total of 251 people were injured.

Dr. Jamal Obeidat, a local health official, urged people to stay inside and close windows and doors. The nearest residential area is 25 kilometers (15 miles) away.

Aqaba is on the northern tip of the Red Sea, next to the Israeli city of Eilat, which is just across the border. Both are popular beach and diving destinations.

Eilat's emergency services said in a statement that there was no impact on the city but that they were following the situation closely.

Tragic teen party mystery in South Africa

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—South African authorities were seeking answers Monday, a day after 21 underage teenagers partying after the end of school exams died in a mysterious incident at a nightclub. The bodies of many of the victims, the youngest a 13-year-old girl, were discovered by police lying on tables, slumped in chairs and couches, and sprawled on the dancefloor of the club in the early hours of Sunday morning.

"They died as they danced," Police Minister Bheki Cele said. "They dance, fall, and die. Literally."

"Others would just feel dizzy, sleep on the sofa, (and) die. It tells you the story that they were all kids because somebody should have taken note."

Speculation has swirled over the cause of the tragedy, starting with a stampede—that has now been ruled out—to a possible gas leak. Police have sent forensic samples from the victims to a toxicology laboratory to investigate if the teens ingested poison or a toxin at the party.

Police said they were called to the Enyobeni Tavern in the city of East London in Eastern Cape province at around 4 a.m. Sunday morning after receiving a report that there were "lifeless bodies" there. Officers responding to the call walked in on a grim scene: 17 of the teenagers were found dead in the nightclub. Two more died at a local clinic, one died on the way to another hospital and one at that hospital. Their ages were between 13 and 17, police said.

Life & Style

Britney Spears' ex ordered to trial on stalking charge

VENTURA, Calif. (AP)—A California judge found Monday that there is enough evidence against a man once briefly married to Britney Spears who showed up uninvited at the pop star's wedding to go to trial on a felony stalking charge.

After a two-hour preliminary hearing, Ventura County Judge David Worley ruled that 40-year-old Jason Allen Alexander should be held to answer on the charge, along with misdemeanor counts of trespassing, vandalism and battery, court records showed.

Spears

Not guilty pleas to all the charges were entered by an attorney for Alexander, who did not attend and remains jailed.

Spears married longtime boyfriend Sam Asghari at her home in Thousand Oaks, California, on June 9, in front of several dozen guests including Selena Gomez, Drew Barrymore, Paris Hilton and Madonna.

Alexander, a childhood friend of Spears to whom she was married for less than three days in 2004, appeared uninvited at the house before the ceremony, livestreaming his raid on Instagram.

Richard Eubler, a since-fired security guard for Spears, testified at Monday's hearing that Alexander got inside her house and up to the locked door of Spears' bedroom while she was inside, according to multiple media reports.

Eubler said Alexander had also tried to enter the property in the days before the wedding.

Alexander's attorney, Sandra Bisignani, argued there was no evidence he had any intention of harming Spears.

Paul McCartney wows Glastonbury with Dave Grohl and The Boss

LONDON (AP)—Paul McCartney's Glastonbury Festival show was two years late. Fans thought it was worth the wait.

The former Beatle pulled out all the stops—and brought on big-name rock 'n' roll guest stars—for a 2½-hour concert at the southwest England festival on Saturday night.

McCartney was due to play Glastonbury in 2020. That year's festival and the 2021 edition were both scuttled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, at 80, he's the festival's oldest-ever solo headliner.

McCartney and his band treated the huge crowd to Beatles classics like "Get Back," "Hey Jude," "Blackbird" and "Let it Be," along with solo hits including "Live and Let Die" and newer material.

Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl came on to play "Saw Her Standing There" and "Band on the Run." Then Bruce Springsteen and McCartney—the Boss and the Beatle—dueted on Springsteen's "Glory Days" and the early Lennon-McCartney song "I Wanna Be Your Man."

McCartney paid tribute to Beatles bandmate George Harrison, who died in 2001, by performing the Harrison-penned "Something." Thanks to technology, he sang with footage of John Lennon, murdered in 1980, on "I've Got a Feeling."

"I think I've probably just seen one of the most legendary performances ever," fan Jake Richardson said after the show.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs receives lifetime honor at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—With a speech about his own inspirational dream for the Black community, Sean "Diddy" Combs channeled the spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. while accepting the BET Awards' highest honor Sunday night.

After Combs received his Lifetime Achievement Award, the music mogul said God put a special message in his heart to deliver his "new dream." He was presented the award by Babyface and Ye (formerly known as Kanye West), who called Combs his "favorite artist" growing up.

Combs

"I got this dream of Black people being free," Combs said, with Babyface and Ye standing behind him at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. "I got this dream of us controlling our own destiny. I got this dream of us taking accountability and stop killing each other. I got this dream of us being rich and wealthy and living on the same block. I have this dream of us unifying."

The BET Awards celebrate the contributions that people of color have made through the entertainment realm, highlighting winners in 19 categories, including film and sports.

Doja Cat, Drake and Ari Lennox entered the awards with the most nominations, but came away with no trophies. Silk Sonic—formed by Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak—won two awards including album of the year for their project "An Evening with Silk Sonic."

'Elvis' is king, alone, of box office after final tallies

NEW YORK (AP)—"Elvis" has won its box-office dance-off with "Top Gun: Maverick." After the two films reported the same ticket sales Sunday, Monday's final numbers has "Elvis," alone, as king of the weekend.

"Elvis" ultimately grossed $31.1 million from Friday to Sunday, according to Warner Bros.' final figures Monday. That's a touch above the $30.5 million the studio forecast on Sunday. When film studios report box office on Sunday, they're able to fairly accurately predict Sunday's ticket sales.

Paramount Pictures, on the other hand, slightly overestimated how "Top Gun: Maverick" fared in its fifth weekend. After the studio reported the same $30.5 million for the "Top Gun" sequel on Sunday, the studio's final number came in at $29.6 million.

Regardless, both films performed well. Baz Luhrmann's Elvis Presley biopic opened above expectations, and brought out large numbers of older moviegoers — a segment of the audience that's been slow to return to theaters during the pandemic.

"Top Gun: Maverick" continued to hold remarkably well, dipping a modest 34% percent in its fifth weekend. Overall, the Joseph Kosinski-directed film starring Tom Cruise has earned about $1 billion worldwide, including more than $520 million domestically.

This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Austin Butler in a scene from "Elvis." AP

Victim of physical violence still wrestles with impact

DEAR ABBY: Many years ago, I was the victim of a violent assault that my then-11-year-old daughter witnessed. It traumatized both of us, but me, the worst. I completely dove off the deep end. I started drinking and smoking pot, and quit going to church. My whole personality changed. I dumped every moment with my children I could onto my husband so I could go out with my "friends" to clubs, bars, concerts or parties. I then started having affairs with many different people, including women. My husband knew about all of it, and despite the torture and pain I put him through, he stayed with me.

Years later, I have managed to slowly heal from that devastating assault. I have found true joy in my children and being a mom again. I don't party, drink or smoke anymore. But one thing has become clear: I'm no longer sexually attracted to my husband. I love him very much, but the thought of being intimate with him grosses me out. It makes me so uncomfortable. I don't even like it when he tries to caress me. It has been like this for a year. But I do love holding hands with him and cuddling with him.

I feel bad because I know he has needs, but I just can't bring myself to get physical with him. I've actually thought that leaving him might be necessary because he has never fully healed from what I've done, and I'm still struggling with finding other men attractive. Abby, what do I do?

PUTTING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER

DEAR PUTTING: Please accept my sympathy for what happened to you. I am struck by the fact that nowhere in your letter did you mention receiving counseling after the assault. If you didn't, please seek a referral to a licensed mental health professional now so you can understand the connection between what you experienced in your assault and your lack of feelings for your husband. You owe it to both of you.

Go online and search on "services for victims of crime" in your state. Help is available through these resources. Alternatively, your physician or health insurance provider can give you a referral. Explain to your husband that the problem isn't him—it's you—and you will be getting help for it. Please don't wait to reach out because help is available.

DEAR ABBY: My 45-year-old son is getting married to a lovely girl. More good news: She is an heiress and in a financial bracket that I can never compete with. They are having a big wedding. I need help finding a gift that will have meaning to them. They already have a house, fancy trips and everything they need.

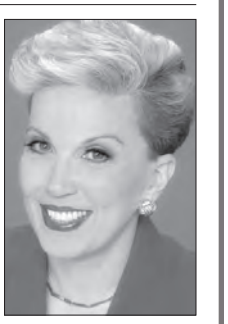
BAFFLED IN OHIO

DEAR BAFFLED: Because you're not an heiress, consider giving them something money can't buy—something personal. If she cooks when they're not traveling or has someone to do it for them, a collection of your family's recipes—especially your son's favorites—might be appreciated. And if they plan to start a family later on, consider giving his wife his baby book if you made one for him.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

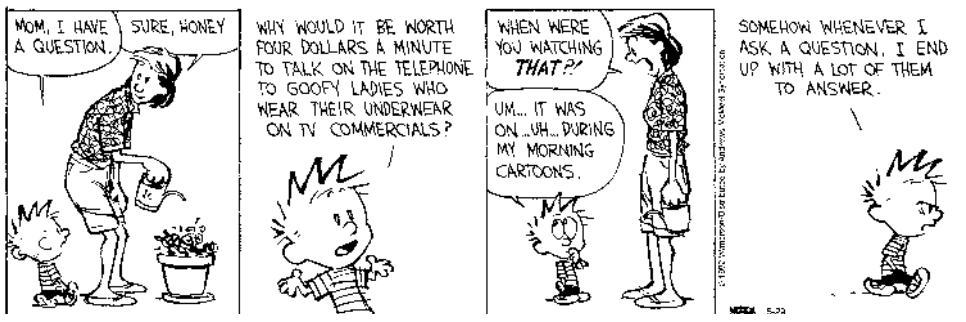


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

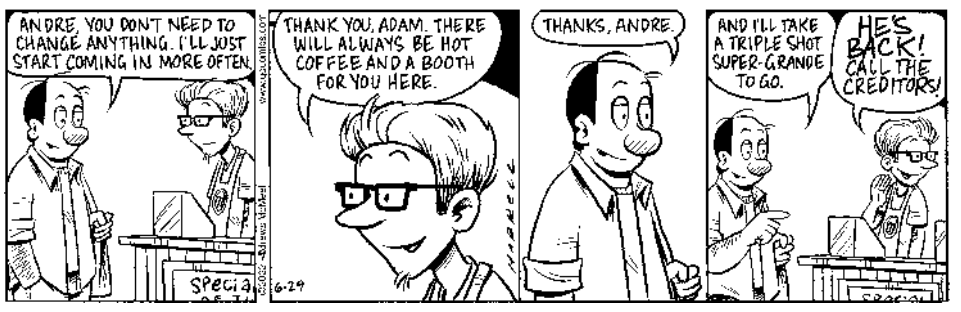

MOM, I HAVE A QUESTION.
SURE, HONEY
WHY WOULD IT BE WORTH FOUR DOLLARS A MINUTE TO TALK ON THE TELEPHONE TO GOOFY LADIES WHO WEAR THEIR UNDERWEAR ON TV COMMERCIALS?
WHEN WERE YOU WATCHING THAT?!
UM... IT WAS ON...UH... DURING MY MORNING CARTOONS.
SOMEHOW WHENEVER I ASK A QUESTION, I END UP WITH A LOT OF THEM TO ANSWER.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ANDRE, YOU DON'T NEED TO CHANGE ANYTHING. I'LL JUST START COMING IN MORE OFTEN.
THANK YOU, ADAM. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE HOT COFFEE AND A BOOTH FOR YOU HERE.
THANKS, ANDRE.
AND I'LL TAKE A TRIPLE SHOT SUPER-GRANDE TO GO.
HE'S BACK! CALL THE CREDITORS!
6-29

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE ME SUCKED INTO WATCHING THIS DUMB DOG SOAP OPERA, "THE BOLD AND THE NEUTERED"!
IF ENO EVER FOUND OUT, HE'D NEVER STOP GIVING ME GRIEF.
I CAN'T BELIEVE BUTTERCUP IS CHEATING ON REX WITH HER SISTER'S MANGY BOYFRIEND!
SHHH!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

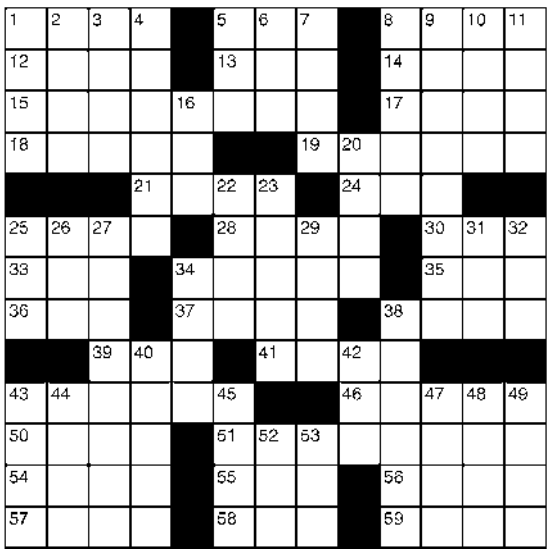
ACROSS
1 Jessica of "Dark Angel"
5 Wager
8 Diner orders
12 Broadway flop
13 Hearty quaff
14 Aviation prefix
15 Short-range headlights
17 Eliot Ness, e.g.
18 Road twists
19 Girl Scout units
21 Flag feature
24 Hostel
25 Guys' dates
28 San —, Italy
30 Favorite pal, for short
33 Swiss canton
34 Suggest
35 Frazier foe
36 Country singer McGraw
37 Pairs
38 Rocky outcrop
39 Nabokov novel
41 Nickelodeon's "Explorer"
43 At first, in baseball
46 Golfer Palmer, to fans
50 Capital of Ukraine
51 "The House of Mirth" heroine
54 Antioxidant berry
55 Music booster
56 "The Good Earth" heroine
57 Hankerings
58 Refusals
59 "Apollo 13" org.

DOWN
1 Competent
2 Novelist Anita
3 Upscale autos
4 Convent leader
5 Sheep call
6 Shade tree
7 Try out
8 Relay stick
9 Tangy bakery buy
10 Golf hazard
11 Some heirs
16 Superlative suffix
20 Mob scene
22 In — (lined up)
23 Fix a lawn
25 Belly
26 Shapiro of NPR
27 Succotash morsel
29 Japanese soup
31 Ga. neighbor
32 Pear-shaped fruit
34 School orgs.
38 Diamond makeup
40 Jazz great Miles
42 Shaft of light
43 Fine
44 Pleasing
45 Flair
47 "The Lion King" lion
48 Nest egg choices
49 Sicilian spouter
52 "As I see it," to a texter
53 Vinyl records

Solution time: 23 mins.

I	T	E	M	■	O	E	A	■	P	S	S	T
N	A	R	C	■	O	W	N	■	L	E	A	R
I	U	R	H	O	J	E	I	■	E	A	S	E
■	■	■	F	R	A	■	F	R	A	M	F	S
C	O	M	A	S	■	D	A	I	S	■	■	■
R	A	U	L	■	T	U	R	G	E	N	E	V
A	H	I	■	C	R	E	M	A	■	E	V	A
I	U	R	M	O	I	L	S	■	S	A	I	L
■	■	■	A	L	B	S	■	A	P	P	L	E
L	A	N	D	A	U	■	A	I	L	■	■	■
O	V	I	D	■	T	U	R	M	F	R	I	C
C	O	C	O	■	E	S	C	■	E	U	R	O
K	N	E	W	■	S	O	S	■	N	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 6-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Camila Mendes, 28; Sharon Conley, 51; Melora Hardin, 55; Gary Busey, 78.

Happy Birthday: Your expectations and energy level are high this year. Having a strategy in place and a goal in mind will be essential if you want to take advantage of opportunities that come your way. Be bold but willing to compromise, and be passionate without overreacting. Your numbers are 7, 10, 19, 26, 35, 41, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Have a plan that ensures you put pent-up energy to good use. Avoid conflict, and focus on what's important to you. A problem with a friend or relative will transpire if you aren't diplomatic. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Size up situations before getting involved. Look for the best way to use your skills. Attend a reunion or contact someone you haven't seen in a long time. Being responsible will help build trust and win favors. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Allocate your money wisely. Don't spend unnecessarily or let anyone talk you out of your hard-earned cash. Your generous nature will get you in trouble. Look at how best to use your attributes to help others. Self-improvement is featured. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Think twice before saying or doing something you may regret. You'll be prone to overreacting or making assumptions that can get you in trouble. Slow down, live in the moment and think the best instead of the worst. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Evaluate a sensitive situation, and don't agree to anything that can disrupt your plans. Take relationships seriously, and discuss your feelings in-depth. Consider what others expect of you and the cost involved if you want to work in unison with someone. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You'll face competition. Be prepared to make a last-minute change if it will help you dissuade someone from getting in your way. Choose associates who are working amicably to get the same results as you. Make knowledge and experience your priorities. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Your intelligence and charm will ward off the opposition. Be a good listener, and you'll figure out how to outmaneuver someone trying to beat you. Put your energy into getting things done instead of arguing with someone who will never see things your way. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* An open mind will stimulate your creative imagination. Do something that gets you out of the house, and use your skills and experience to make your life fun. Have a positive outlook. A change of scenery will lead to new beginnings. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Joint ventures and shared expenses will leave you in limbo. You are better off fending for yourself and focusing on what makes you happy. Surround yourself with people who share your dreams, not someone who wants to change you. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stick close to home and your loved ones. Don't get swept up in a scam that offers unrealistic profits. Put your energy where it will contribute to stability, personal security and peace of mind. Don't divulge secrets. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't do what you don't like or feel obligated to take on someone's responsibilities or dreams. Make your home your sanctuary, and you'll find peace of mind. Surround yourself with people you love. Take only what you need. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You'll have great ideas, but they won't be cheap. Budget to see what you can afford before you jump into a grand plan that leads to a stressful situation. You will avoid a costly mistake by thinking matters through. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are caring, helpful and thoughtful. You are inventive and responsive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			3					
	5		9		6			
	1	4				2		
	4						9	
9								3
7	2					6	8	1
	6		8	9			1	
	3		5	6			2	
	7	9	1	4	2	3	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 6/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	2	6	9	8	5	1	3	4
5	9	3	4	1	2	7	6	8
1	4	8	6	3	7	2	5	9
9	3	1	5	2	6	4	8	7
4	8	5	3	7	9	6	2	1
6	7	2	8	4	1	5	9	3
3	1	4	2	5	8	9	7	6
8	5	9	7	6	4	3	1	2
2	6	7	1	9	3	8	4	5

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MONKEYS ARE CUTE — Solution: 8 letters

Y	L	I	M	A	F	V	H	L	A	U	G	H	B	N
F	P	L	A	I	C	O	S	C	E	T	I	A	A	O
F	M	O	Y	S	W	I	Q	S	N	M	N	T	B	Z
U	U	H	C	L	I	C	E	E	I	A	U	E	O	A
L	J	U	N	G	L	E	G	T	N	G	R	R	O	M
F	T	G	U	E	D	I	A	A	N	A	S	B	N	A
E	R	S	A	S	L	T	S	A	H	O	O	Z	S	C
Z	E	V	M	L	E	G	R	S	F	I	S	E	R	A
I	E	A	E	E	N	O	O	T	R	A	C	E	P	Q
S	R	T	T	A	L	R	U	G	N	A	L	E	Y	U
T	N	H	T	C	T	I	U	R	F	U	N	N	Y	E
I	R	U	L	A	R	L	M	A	N	D	R	I	L	L
E	R	I	I	Y	A	L	P	S	E	I	R	R	E	B
E	M	L	C	B	L	A	N	K	E	T	O	Y	S	L
B	A	B	Y	K	I	N	G	R	O	R	E	P	M	E

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Amazon, Ape, Baboons, Baby, Banana, Berries, Blanket, Branch, Cartoon, Climb, Copy, Emperor, Eyes, Face, Family, Fluffy, Fruit, Funny, Gorilla, Hugs, Imitate, Intelligent, Jump, Jungle, King, Langur, Laugh, Leaves, Lemur, Macaque, Mandrill, Nature, Orangutan, Play, Seeds, Share, Silly, Size, Smart, Smile, Social, Soft, Tail, Teeth, Toys, Tree, Trick, Voice, Wild, Zoo

Yesterday's Answer: Peameal

Treasuries 27, 29, 31 and 33 through 48 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Sources: Irving decides to exercise $37M option with Nets

Kyrie Irving arrives at the BET Awards on Sunday, June 26, 2022, at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. AP

NEW YORK (AP)— Kyrie Irving has decided to exercise his $36.9 million option for the coming season and will remain under contract with the Brooklyn Nets, two people with knowledge of his decision said Monday.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because the Nets had not confirmed the decision publicly.

The Athletic first reported Irving's decision. "Normal people keep the world going, but those who dare to be different lead us into tomorrow. I've made my decision to opt in. See you in the fall," the outlet quoted Irving as saying.

On Twitter, Irving posted a separate statement: "I know who I am," was the message there.

For now, that still means a member of the Nets.

The seven-time All-Star averaged 27.4 points and 5.8 assists this past season for the Nets, with whom he has spent the last three seasons. He's about to enter the final season in a four-year, $137 million deal with Brooklyn.

Irving had until Wednesday to inform the Nets of his opt-in decision. It closes one element of the ongoing saga regarding Irving's future, which has been one of the biggest storylines as the league prepares for the start of free agency on Thursday.

However, it may not be over. Irving could still have his contract extended before free agency begins. Also, the Nets could still trade him — and in fact, teams might be more interested in a deal now that Irving is on an expiring contract.

He appeared in only 29 regular-season games this past season, largely because of his decision to not be vaccinated against COVID-19. That made him ineligible to play in most of Brooklyn's home games, until getting an exemption to New York City's vaccine mandate in the spring.

Irving said after the Nets were swept by Boston in the first round that he planned on remaining in Brooklyn, even talking about him and Kevin Durant managing the franchise along with general manager Sean Marks and owner Joe Tsai.

But Marks later made clear that discussions about Irving's future would have to involve discussions about being more available to the team, and they could not come to an agreement on a long-term extension that could have paid Irving an additional $185 million over four years.

Irving also took a leave of absence from the team during the 2020-21 season, though the Nets looked on track to reach the NBA Finals before Irving sprained his ankle in Game 4 of the East semifinals against the Milwaukee Bucks, who rallied to win the series in seven games.

The Nets returned this past season thinking title with their core of Irving, Durant and James Harden. It didn't work out anywhere near as planned. Irving wasn't with the team for the majority of the season, Harden ended up getting traded to Philadelphia, the Nets needed to survive the play-in tournament just to make the playoffs, and Brooklyn wound up getting swept in the first round by the eventual Eastern Conference champions.

Durant and Irving are close friends who came to the Nets together in July 2019. Durant signed his own extension last summer, but had Irving not remained with the franchise next season, it certainly could have led to Durant pondering his own future in Brooklyn.

But with Irving presumably back, and with Ben Simmons — who didn't play at all this season and was acquired by the Nets in the Harden trade — set to team up alongside Irving and Durant this coming season, Brooklyn could quickly return to contender status.

Irving could have made this all go away over the weekend, or at least turned the full boil down closer to simmer, when asked by Complex News at the BET Awards if he still wants to play for the Nets. He declined to answer. He wasn't rude about it, did it with a smile, but didn't provide so much as a hint.

A tiny one came Monday when the clip was posted to Instagram and Irving was among those to comment.

"When I smile like that, it means there's more to the story," Irving wrote Monday, several hours before his opt-in decision was revealed. "I'll have my time to address things."

Bulls remain hopeful LaVine will choose to remain in Chicago

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago Bulls remain hopeful All-Star guard Zach LaVine will choose to re-sign with them rather than join another team as an unrestricted free agent.

Executive vice president Arturas Karnisovas has been consistent in saying publicly the organization wants to keep LaVine. And he did it again on Monday.

"We hope Zach is here for a long time, and nothing changed," Karnisovas said at a news conference to introduce first-round draft pick Dalen Terry.

LaVine's situation is obviously the biggest story hovering over the Bulls, with the free-agent negotiating period opening Thursday evening.

Karnisovas wants to keep intact a core that helped Chicago reach the playoffs for the first time in five years.

LaVine averaged 24.4 points and made his second straight All-Star team last year. It ended with his first trip to the playoffs in his eighth year as a pro. The Bulls lost in the first round to Milwaukee in five games.

LaVine's four-year, $78 million contract is up and he said after the season that he plans to explore the market as an unrestricted free agent for the first time in his career after five years in Chicago. He did not rule out returning to the Bulls, who can offer a max contract worth about $212 million. The most he can get from another team is approximately $157 million over four years.

How comfortable the Bulls are about offering a five-year deal is another question. Karnisovas played it coy when asked.

"I'm confident. I'm confident in approaching this free agency the next couple days, sitting down with our group, looking at a lot of things," he said.

The past season wasn't exactly an easy one for LaVine. He dealt with a thumb injury early and was in and out of the lineup the final few months because of a left knee injury.

LaVine had platelet-rich plasma therapy, a cortisone injection and fluid drained from his knee in Los Angeles before the All-Star break. He had arthroscopic surgery on it last month.

"I think he's gonna be healthy," Karnisovas said. "I think he's now progressing great."

The Bulls went 46-36 and made the playoffs for the first time since 2017 following a major makeover, with DeMar DeRozan and LaVine leading the way. Chicago got off to a big start and finished with its best record since the 2014-15 team went 50-32 in former coach Tom Thibodeau's final season.

The Bulls also went from leading the Eastern Conference to finishing sixth, losing 15 of their final 22 regular-season games. They dealt with a long list of injuries, making it tough for them to develop continuity and compete with the best teams.

"This group has been here only since October," Karnisovas said. "We're still trying to get used to how to play with each other."

Sources: Wall to be bought out, intends to join Clippers

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

John Wall and the Houston Rockets have agreed that his contract will be bought out, a move that will free him to sign with any team of his choosing, two people with knowledge of the situation said Monday night.

Wall's preference will be to sign with the Los Angeles Clippers, according to one of the people who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the five-time All-Star guard had not announced his intentions publicly.

Wall will receive roughly $41 million from Houston, according to the other person who spoke with AP. Wall was scheduled to make $47.4 million this coming season, his last in what was a four-year contract.

Yahoo first reported that Wall and the Rockets came to the buyout decision. ESPN first reported that Wall intends to join the Clippers, presumably for the taxpayer mid-level exception of about $6.4 million — basically the same amount he's giving back to the Rockets to become a free agent. No agreement can be struck between Wall and any team until he clears waivers and becomes a free agent.

Wall has been working out in recent weeks, including some sessions at the University of Miami.

Wall played in 40 games with Houston in the 2020-21 season, averaging 20.6 points and 6.9 assists. He played his first nine seasons in Washington and, for his career, has averaged 19.1 points and 9.1 assists in 613 regular season games.

Wall did not appear in any games for Houston this past season. The Rockets are rebuilding around a young core, and Wall — who will turn 32 in September — wasn't going to be in their plans going forward.

He was selected for the All-Star Game in five consecutive seasons from 2014 through 2018. Since the last of those selections 4 1/2 seasons ago, he has played in exactly 82 games, including playoffs — the equivalent of one NBA season — while making $150 million in salary and seeing his career derailed by injuries.

Wall has a lengthy injury and surgical history. He underwent surgeries on both knees in 2016, had his 2018-19 season end prematurely because of surgery for bone spurs in his left heel, then a tear of his left Achilles tendon necessitated another operation in 2019 and a year-long recovery plan.

He has not appeared in an NBA game since April 23, 2021.

The development of Wall and the Rockets striking a buyout deal comes on the same day that another high-profile point guard — Brooklyn's Kyrie Irving — announced that he is exercising his $36.9 million option for the final year of his deal with the Nets.

NBA free agency officially opens with the start of negotiating windows on Thursday. In most cases, new contracts can be signed starting July 6.

Gray, Sánchez help Twins widen division lead over Guardians

CLEVELAND (AP)—Sonny Gray turned an emotional, distracting day for the Twins into a dominant one.

The right-hander pitched seven superb innings and Gary Sánchez homered and drove in four runs to help Minnesota stretch its lead in the AL Central with an 11-1 blowout of the Cleveland Guardians on Monday night.

When they arrived in Cleveland on Sunday night ahead of the five-game series, the first-place Twins were rocked by news that pitching coach Wes Johnson is leaving to take over at LSU.

"I'm happy for him. I really am," manager Rocco Baldelli said before the game. "This is the best move for Wes. I love him and I love everything that he's done for this organization. We're all going to miss him."

The decision was felt throughout Minnesota's clubhouse, but especially among the team's pitchers.

Gray, acquired in March from Cincinnati, had grown close to Johnson and said he doesn't want him to go.

"It's a tough one," said the right-hander, who allowed just three singles Monday night. "It's someone who I became really close with and I think if you know me at all, letting people in and getting into relationships in that respect, I put my guard up a lot.

"I was mad at him a lot today. I was happy for him a lot today. I used every emotion and kind of everything that was going through, I kind of used it to pour into the game."

Sánchez hit a three-run homer in the second inning off Triston McKenzie (4-6), sending the first-place Twins on their way to an easy win. Nick Gordon and Carlos Correa added two-run homers for Minnesota, now three games up on Cleveland.

The Guardians had briefly moved atop the division last week after rallying to win two of three in Minneapolis, but they've lost five straight. These rivals will play a day-night doubleheader Tuesday and are meeting eight times in 10 days before not seeing each other again until September.

"It was really nice to come away with the first one," Gray said. "We got four more of these things in the next three days, so it's going to be hopefully a good three days for us."

Gray (4-1) never let the Guardians get going. He gave up hits in each of the first two innings, then retired 15 of 16 before walking José Ramírez to start the seventh — his first walk allowed in 22 innings.

"He's really good," Guardians manager Terry Francona said. "Now that he's starting to get lengthened out where he's not on a pitch count, he can go pitch. He changes speeds. He locates. He's good. He's really good."

Gray got a no-decision last week against the Guardians. He changed his game plan this time around.

"Attacking guys, coming at guys," he said. "My last game I might have tried to strike these guys out a little too much. Throughout their lineup, they have good bat-to-ball skills and they're not a team where you're just going to come in and punch out 10."

AP

Minnesota Twins starting pitcher Sonny Gray throws against the Cleveland Guardians during the first inning of a baseball game Monday, June 27, 2022, in Cleveland.

Yankees 9, Athletics 5

In New York, Josh Donaldson hit a go-ahead two-run double during a six-run sixth inning and New York beat Oakland.

The Yankees took advantage of two catcher's interference calls, a hit batter and a walk to spark their rally. Donaldson lined an 0-2 fastball from A.J. Puk (1-1) into left field for a 6-5 lead.

New York won after trailing for the 23rd time this season and improved its majors-best record to 54-20.

Evis Andrus hit a three-run double for Oakland in the third.

Albert Abreu (1-0) struck out four in 2 1/3 hitless innings.

Rockies 4, Dodgers 0

In Denver, Chad Kuhl pitched a three-hitter for his first career shutout and Colorado beat Los Angeles.

José Iglesias hit a two-run homer and the Rockies handed Tyler Anderson (8-1) his first loss in 12 starts and two relief appearances this season. Kris Bryant went 1 for 4 in his return to the lineup after missing more than a month with a lower back strain.

Kuhl (5-5) was sharp after giving up 11 runs over 14 1/3 innings in his previous three starts. He struck out five and didn't walk a batter in the longest outing of his career.

It was the 27th individual shutout in the history of hitter-friendly Coors Field.

Cardinals 9, Marlins 0

In St. Louis, Juan Yepez had his first career multi-homer game and Adam Wainwright pitched seven scoreless innings as St. Louis beat Miami.

Yepez drove in five runs. Paul Goldschmidt went 4 for 4 with a home run and two RBIs.

Wainwright (6-5) scattered seven hits through his first five innings. He retired the final seven batters he faced and struck out nine.

Marlins starter Pablo López (5-4) gave up five runs in five innings.

Angels 4, White Sox 3

In Anaheim, Calif., Taylor Ward hit a go-ahead double in the seventh inning, Noah Syndergaard snapped a four-game losing streak Los Angeles rallied past Chicago.

Brandon Marsh added three hits for the Angels, who have won two straight home games for the first time in nearly five weeks. This one came just after nine players and coaches were suspended for their roles in a brawl with Seattle on Sunday.

Syndergaard (5-6) allowed three runs on six hits in seven innings and struck out seven. Raisel Iglesias worked the ninth for his 14th save.

Ward's two-run double off the wall in right-center off Reynaldo Lopez (4-2) was just beyond the reach of center fielder Luis Robert.

Blue Jays 7, Red Sox 2

In Toronto, Kevin Gausman matched a season high with 10 strikeouts over seven scoreless innings, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. homered and Toronto halted Boston's seven-game winning streak.

Guerrero hit a two-run home run, his 18th of the season, Matt Chapman also hit a two-run blast and George Springer added a solo shot.

Gausman (6-6) allowed four hits and walked two.

Red Sox right-hander Connor Seabold (0-1) allowed seven runs and nine hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Nationals 3, Pirates 2

In Washington, Maikel Franco hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning and Washington beat Pittsburgh.

Luis García had three hits for the Nationals, who've won five of seven.

Top prospect Oneil Cruz hit his first homer of the season for Pittsburgh.

Pirates reliever Chris Stratton (4-4) was an out away from working around García's leadoff double in the eighth when Franco launched a first-pitch slider to left-center, giving the Nationals their first lead of the night.

Carl Edwards Jr. (2-1) pitched two scoreless innings, and Kyle Finnegan handled the ninth for his first save.

Rangers 10, Royals 4

In Kansas City, Mo., Mitch Garver hit a two-run homer, Kole Calhoun also drove in two runs and Texas beat Kansas City.

Martin Perez (6-2) allowed four runs on seven hits in six innings.

Kris Bubic (1-5) gave up seven runs, five earned, in 4 2/3 innings.

Orioles 9, Mariners 2

In Seattle, Tyler Wells pitched five nearly perfect innings, Adley Rutschman launched one of Baltimore's five home runs and the Orioles held Seattle to three hits.

Wells (6-4) was perfect until allowing Cal Raleigh's homer with two outs in the fifth. He retired the next batter before handing off to the bullpen, finishing with three strikeouts on 63 pitches.

Joey Krehbiel and Keegan Akin combined to close out Baltimore's gem. Akin got his first save with 3 1/3 scoreless innings.

George Kirby (2-3) allowed seven runs on nine hits, including four homers, over four innings. Mariners starters had gone a franchise-record 24 consecutive games without giving up four runs.

Rutschman and Ryan Mountcastle hit back-to-back homers in the third, and Anthony Santander and Austin Hays clubbed consecutive drives in the fourth. Jorge Mateo added a solo shot in the sixth.

Angels' Nevin banned 10 games for brawl; M's Winker gets 7

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Los Angeles Angels interim manager Phil Nevin was suspended 10 games and Seattle Mariners outfielder Jesse Winker received a seven-game ban from Major League Baseball for their roles in a benches-clearing brawl during the second inning of Sunday's game.

Nevin and Winker were two of 12 players or coaches suspended between the teams, according to an MLB release Monday night.

Mariners shortstop J.P. Crawford received five games, Angels pitchers Ryan Tepera and Andrew Wantz were suspended for three, and Mariners outfielder Julio Rodríguez, Angels reliever Raisel Iglesias and major league interpreter Manny Del Campo received two games.

Angels third baseman Anthony Rendon, who is out for the rest of the season after undergoing wrist surgery, will be suspended five games when he returns from the injured list. For now, he is prohibited from sitting on the bench for the next seven games.

Nevin received a significant suspension for Angels opener Wantz intentionally throwing at Winker while warnings were in place for both teams. Nevin made the late decision to pitch Wantz instead of scheduled starter Jose Suarez.

Nevin's suspension began Monday night as the Angels opened a series against the Chicago White Sox. Bench coach Ray Montgomery, who received a two-game suspension, will manage in Nevin's place. Montgomery and catching coach Bill

Haselman (one game) will begin serving their suspensions after assistant pitching coach Dom Chiti returns from his five-game ban.

The punishments were announced within 90 minutes of Los Angeles' and Seattle's games Monday night.

Winker was hit by the first pitch of the second inning by Wantz, who had also thrown a pitch behind Rodríguez's head during in the first inning. Wantz, who is suspended for three games, is the only player not appealing.

The up-and-in pitches appeared to be the Angels' response to Erik Swanson's 95 mph fastball near Mike Trout's head during the ninth inning Saturday night. Trout voiced his frustration about the pitch following the game.

Winker reacted to getting hit by Wantz, angrily yelling and gesturing toward the Angels' dugout. Winker then charged Los Angeles' dugout on the third-base side after yelling at Nevin with both benches and bullpens emptying.

The brawl lasted nearly four minutes, with both teams appearing to throw multiple punches.

The game was delayed for 18 minutes. Of the eight who were ejected, Seattle manager Scott Servais is the only one who wasn't suspended.

Before the bans were announced, Nevin disputed that he used Wantz to throw at Seattle's players.

"That's not factual. But I don't want to get into a war of words with that," Nevin said. "What's done is done. Yesterday's over and done with. We're focused on the White Sox today."

Sunday's brawl may have been the ugliest involving the Angels since one in 1998 in Kansas City after a series of hit batters. Nevin was playing for Los Angeles and received a three-game suspension, while manager Terry Collins was out for eight.

Winker said he expected a lengthy suspension before the Mariners faced Baltimore on Monday night.

"I think it's a bad look on Phil Nevin and could have been handled differently," he said. "But they decide to run their mouth and I didn't like that. It's that simple. There's nothing else left to say about that. They're going to suspend me, they're going to suspend Crawford and that's MLB's decision."

The AL West rivals play 11 more times this season, but not until the start of a four-game series in Seattle on Aug. 5.

Pickleball to celebrate newly striped courts at AMP

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

To celebrate the newly striped pickleball courts at American Memorial Park, the Pickleball Federation of the Northern Mariana Islands is hosting an inaugural event this Saturday, July 2.

PFNMI president Dr. Nelson Krum in inviting the community to join them for a "fun morning and evening of pickleball and learn about the newest sport on Saipan."

Pickleball was started in 1965 and is the fastest growing sport in the country. Locally, Krum said the game is now being played seven days a week on Saipan.

Activities slated this Saturday include a crazy eights event from 7am to 10am, a potluck barbecue at 5pm, and evening play from 6pm to 9pm under the best lights on Saipan.

Krum said the pickleball federation is almost two years old and is actually the newest member of the Northern Marianas Sports Association. He is also inviting everyone who wants to try the sport to attend this weekend's inaugural event.

"Pickleball is easy to pick up as a beginner and loads of fun to play. Free lessons will be given throughout the day. Much laughter and social interaction will be on hand. We will have lots of water and treats. Please bring a dish to the potluck and a chair. We look forward to meeting you and introducing you to a fun new sport!"

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Pickleball Federation of the Northern Mariana Islands now has four newly striped pickleball courts at the American Memorial Park.

With the opening of AMP for pickleball action, the new sport will now have four spanking new courts on island. Following the striping of the court, more than 20 players immediately came out and played.

"About 22 people joined us for our first night's play! We are in heaven with the wonderful lights, so we can play after work until 10pm!" said Krum's wife, Donna.

Dr. Krum also thanked the National Park Service, particularly Barbara Alberti, in the resurfacing and striping of the court at AMP.

"It's wonderful and the culmination of two years' work! Had over 20 people out for the first night, even with the rain," he added.

The PFNMI president added that the inaugural event has also attracted pickleball players from the CNMI's southern neighbor as five players from Guam are coming to take part in the festivities. Krum said the Guamanian players expected to arrive are Ronni Connelly, Derek Alcorn, Albert and Tomi Kronik, and William Josler.

"Five players coming from Guam for our inaugural event! That is huge!"

If you have any questions about PFNMI's inaugural event, call or text Dr. Nelson Krum at 670-789-8201, or email @ nelsonkrum@msn.com. Let him know if you would like to be added to the Pickleball CNMI Group Chat on Whatsapp.

FRUITS

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and Chris [Nelson], I'm very, very thankful to all of them," he said.

Santos said Team NMI's gold medal is very impressive considering the players haven't played an SBL season for nearly three years as Super Typhoon Yutu rendered the baseball field at the Oleai Sports Complex unplayable.

When asked what the team has done so far in terms of celebrating the win after the finals, he said "I'm sure they're all recovering from their hangovers, which is very deserving.… Honestly, the board of directors for SBL and the coaching staff [will] get together with the team and celebrate. They deserve it. They're going to have a proper celebration and then immediately right after that I hope to get right back to work."

NMPMG2022/ANDO AGULTO
The CNMI National Baseball Team players and coaches celebrate the last out in their gold medal game against Guam last Friday at the Francisco "Tan'Ko" M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Santos also said that he's "asked many of them over the time during practice that they all consider helping put teams together so we can get new leagues and have them coach. And also have them put men's teams together as well so we can put together a men's league."

Lastly he gave a huge thank you to Steve from USA Fanter and his construction team and also to the staff at Coral Ocean Resort for transforming the Palacios baseball field into a world class facility.

"We had nothing but great comments from the visiting teams. They were very, very impressed with the field. Huge thanks to the Saipan Baseball League board, especially Bernard Cabrera and his team. They were the ones that daily maintained the field and made sure it was ready for baseball. So they put a lot of hard work into that. I'm very proud of our board. They are a really great group of professionals that from what I think helped make a very successful tournament."

With the baseball team's gold medal win last Friday, Santos is "hopeful that this will help put baseball back on the map for us here this year."

Santos said the SBL board is taking a break after the Mini Games and they will meet sometime next week to hopefully put out more information about a baseball league in the CNMI as it comes.

RUN

From Page 20

pouring rain. However, he said around 25 Run Saipan members pushed through with it because the following week majority of its members are either competing or volunteering in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022.

"The group run was part of our monthly social runs. It was better to do it before the Games started for track and field activities and while athletes were in town. We got to see a few of the Papua New Guinea runners and greeted them. Seeing the high-level athletes train on Beach Road was truly inspirational. It was also our farewell run to our member Audrey Christly who is moving," he said.

The Alaska native Christley won two Run Saipan races during her brief stay on Saipan. She topped the women's division of the Saipan International School's Gecko 5000 held last September in Marpi after she negotiated the 6-kilometer cross country route in 28:10.

The 43-year-old also won the 2nd Marpi Drag Race 5K last February after crossing the finish line in 23:50. The Marpi Drag Race 5K is named after illegal drag racing activities that used to occur in the area.

Dela Cruz said Run Saipan will be losing a fine runner in Christley.

"We will miss her and wish her the best. We thank her for all the support she has given the running club."

Meanwhile, the Run Saipan president said this week will mark the deadline of the non-profit organization's shoe drive that will benefit community members on Rota who will take part in a 5K fun run, dubbed Couch to 5K Run, that will be organized by the Northern Marianas College.

"Last call this week for our shoe drive. We got a lot more shoes than I thought we would get from the beginning," he said.

Run Saipan said those who want to donate their extra pairs of running shoes to please bring them to NMC more specifically to the Office of the President.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. and some members of the non-profit group pose for a group photo in the midst of the pouring rain last June 18.

NAURU

From Page 20

fore their supposed flight to Saipan that the team will endeavor to abide with the host country's (CNMI) COVID-19 protocols and encourage team managers and athletes to sanitize daily and wear masks.

Radio New Zealand reported yesterday that the number of COVID-19 cases on the island nation continue to rise as there are now 2,392 active cases in the community.

Nauru President Lionel Aingimea said 53%—or approximately one in two people—tested are positive with eight people in the acute care unit in the hospital.

In addition, there are three moderate to severe cases in the hospital, two are adults with underlying illnesses, and one is a child with a high fever.

To help stop the spread of the coronavirus, Aingimea's government has issued a prohibition order on mass gatherings that bans a long list of social activities in order to slow the spread of the virus.

The list of prohibited activities include bingo, church, sports such as karate, market days, birthdays, weddings, and drinking at kava bars.

Aingimea said there are still reports of people that have tested positive leaving their homes and of others gathering in groups and socializing. He wants to remind people that anyone who does not comply with the orders could face a fine of up to AUS$10,000 or go to jail for up to six months.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	54	20	.730	_
Boston	42	32	.568	12
Toronto	41	32	.562	12½
Tampa Bay	40	32	.556	13
Baltimore	35	40	.467	19½

Central Division

Minnesota	42	33	.560	_
Cleveland	36	33	.522	3
Chicago	34	38	.472	6½
Detroit	28	44	.389	12½
Kansas City	26	46	.361	14½

West Division

Houston	45	27	.625	_
Texas	35	37	.486	10
Los Angeles	36	40	.474	11
Seattle	34	41	.453	12½
Oakland	25	50	.333	21½

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

New York	47	27	.635	_
Atlanta	42	32	.568	5
Philadelphia	39	35	.527	8
Miami	33	39	.458	13
Washington	28	48	.368	20

Central Division

Milwaukee	42	33	.560	_
St. Louis	42	34	.553	½
Pittsburgh	29	44	.397	12
Chicago	28	45	.384	13
Cincinnati	25	47	.347	15½

West Division

Los Angeles	45	27	.625	_
San Diego	45	30	.600	1½
San Francisco	39	33	.542	6
Arizona	33	41	.446	13
Colorado	32	42	.432	14

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sources: Irving decides to exercise $37M option with Nets

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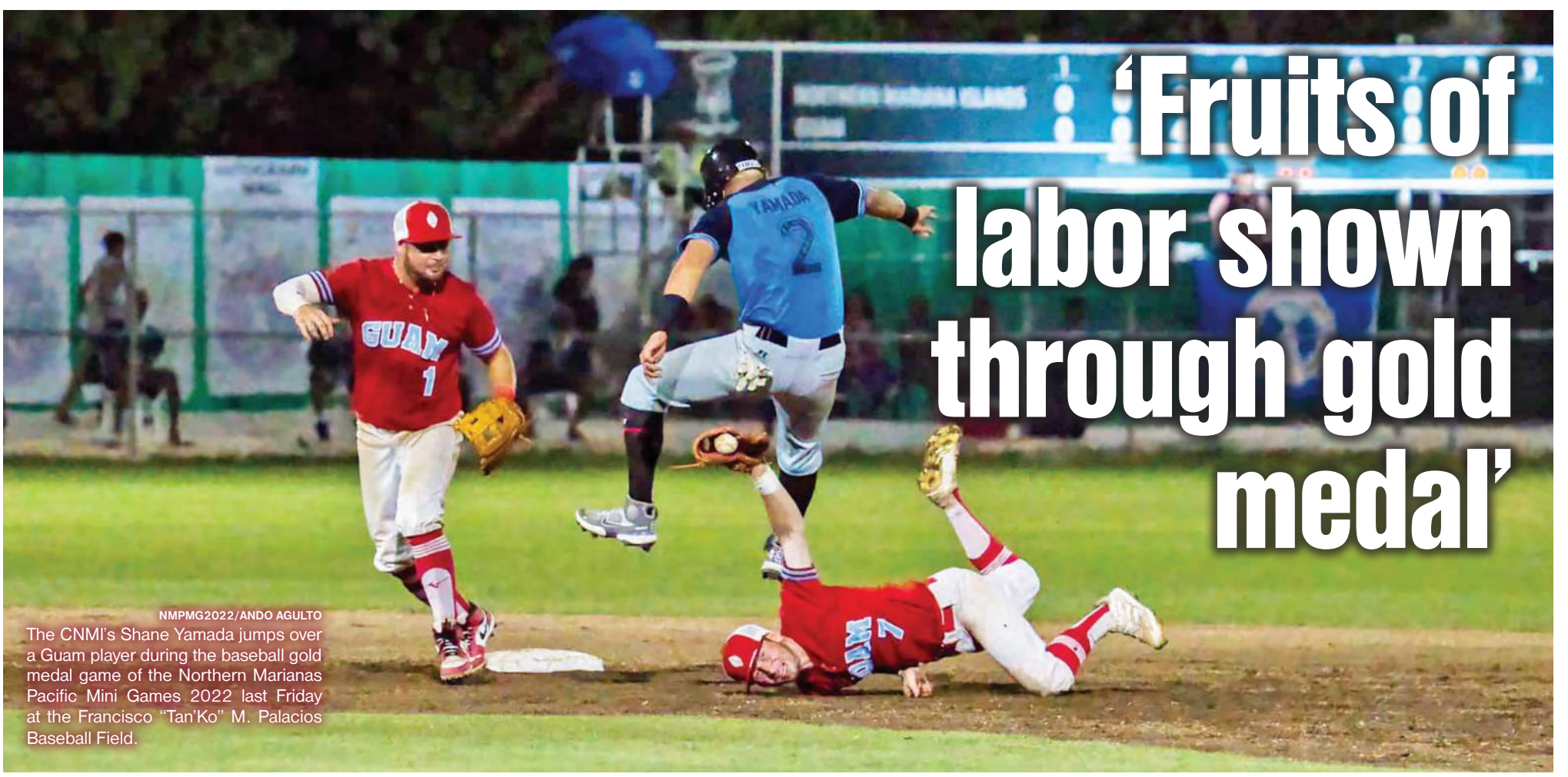

NMPMG2022/ANDO AGULTO

The CNMI's Shane Yamada jumps over a Guam player during the baseball gold medal game of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 last Friday at the Francisco "Tan'Ko" M. Palacios Baseball Field.

'Fruits of labor shown through gold medal'

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

After successfully defending the baseball gold medal in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 at their newly renovated home field, Saipan Baseball League president Jay Santos had nothing but praises for the CNMI National Baseball Team for all their hard work and sacrifices.

"The fruits of their labor has shown through the gold medal… and I'm very, very proud," the longtime Los Angeles Dodgers fan told *Saipan Tribune* during an interview yesterday.

The SBL president said he couldn't have scripted it better after Team NMI's 12-9 win against archrival Guam in the finals in front of more than a thousand fans that encircled the Francisco "Tan'Ko" M. Palacios Baseball Field.

"[I am] extremely proud of the men that came together to put our national team together. It was eight months of a lot of hard work. There was a lot of time taken away from family and work… And so I'm very thankful to all the players for their commitment. And to the manager, Manny Sablan, and the coaching staff, Deron [Flores], Gary [Cruz],

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Run Saipan holds group run amidst pouring rain

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A total of 25 Run Saipan members braved the pouring rain during their group run from Hyatt Regency Saipan to Saipan Computer Services and back last June 18.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It wasn't the usual feral dogs nipping at the heels of Run Saipan members during their group last June 18, as it was actually rain—of the cats and dogs variety—that particular morning that became the issue.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said the entire 5-kilometer run from the Hyatt Regency Saipan to Saipan Computer Services and back was done in the hard

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Nauru misses Games due to COVID-19

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Now it can be told.

Twenty island nations didn't partake in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 that concluded last Saturday, as Nauru wasn't able to send its 35-strong delegation to the 10-day sporting event due to COVID-19, according to Pacific Games Council CEO Andrew Minogue.

"Their charter flight was cancelled due to their first ever COVID-19 outbreak," he said.

Minogue said Nauru informed the Pacific Games Council that they were pulling out of the Games the same day the opening ceremony was held.

MARK RABAGO

The Nauru flagbearer joins the parade of nations during the opening ceremony of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 last June 17 at the Oleai Sports Complex.

During the parade of nations last June 17 at the Oleai Sports Complex, the island country was conspicuously absent as only a flagbearer represented Nauru.

A story from Loop Pacific last June 3 indicated that Nauru was about to send 35 athletes to the 11th staging of the quadrennial event. They were bannered by the island nation's weightlifting team made up 17 athletes, 10 for track and field, and eight tennis players.

The press release also noted that the weightlifting team was comprised of a number of promising youth athletes that Nauru's weightlifting federation hopes to develop in the next few years.

The athletics team, meanwhile, was composed of athletes who performed admirably during Nauru's Constitution Day sports day. The tennis team, on the other hand, was competing again in the region after being absent for a number of years.

Nauru's chef de mission to the Games, Gay Uera, said a couple of weeks be-

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